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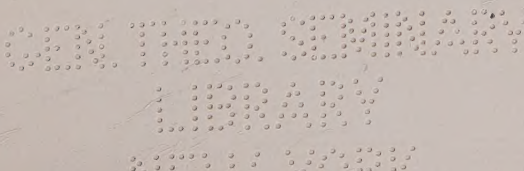


CHRISTIAN VERITY

LEONARD PRESTIGE



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PREFACE

IT is almost inevitable that a certain type of reviewer will assert (if he troubles to handle this book at all) that it nowhere touches human life. May I disarm him at once by stating that it touches one human life pretty closely; for it expresses (as well as I can manage to make it) the sort of reflections which withhold me, myself, from succumbing to a recurrent temptation to reject *in toto* Christianity (including the Sermon on the Mount and the other moral teachings of that religion).

Now I am persuaded that no one can *demonstrate* the existence of God: it follows that no one can *demonstrate* the truth of religion. God and religion (like most of the things of this life) are things we accept or reject on a balance of probabilities; and these probabilities are drawn not from theology alone or any other single science, but from our conscious and subconscious convictions about the whole of human life and experience. In other words, we walk by faith and not by sight. Like good scientists, we base our lives upon a workable hypothesis (the best we can discover); and the only form of rational proof (if we must use the word proof at all) that we can offer is the fact that our hypothesis continues to satisfy, better than any alternative hypothesis, the requirements both of coherence with itself and of

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agreeableness with, and illumination of, the ever-widening range of our experience.

I wish therefore to state with all possible emphasis, that in allowing this book to go forth I do not for a moment suppose that it can demonstrate the truth of religion. My aim is to present the Christian hypothesis as nearly as I can in the form in which it produces conviction in myself; (i) for the sake of recording, in the face of the almost inconceivably stupid misconceptions of Christianity which are prevalent among many persons of ordinary secular education, the principles upon which I believe the Christian faith to be founded, and (ii) because, frankly, I do find it difficult to believe that reflections such as these may not be of some slight value to the intellectual and moral life of some other normal fellow-creature.

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CHAPTER I

GOD

(i) *The Gods Men Worship*

IN the history of the world there have been (and are) many gods and many religions.

You cannot have a religion without a god of some kind or other. Religion means simply the attitude of man towards some person or thing which he takes to himself as the object of his devotion and permits to control his actions. So money is sometimes spoken of as a god—"He makes money his god"—because the person of whom such a statement can be made is devoting his affections and directing his will, governing his conduct and sacrificing other objects, with a view to the pursuit of money. In the same way St. Paul spoke of those "whose god is their belly," because they took their physical appetites as the main object of their life's devotion.

In this sense of the word "god," then, it is clear that there are in fact many gods—as many as there are objects to which men have been led to devote themselves. Many primitive religions have been based on the desire to propitiate the forces which are displayed in the mysterious powers of Nature,

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lying far beyond human control, in sea or sky or vegetation. Again, in many religions the real object of worship has become simply the satisfaction of some form of human emotion or lust, even though it has been given a personal name and its devotees have made images and symbols of their deity, like the Canaanites of the Old Testament, with their immoral worship of Baal in the "groves" and "high places."

It does not matter in the least what outward form is taken to express the object worshipped. The real idolatry lies not in making images, but in treating such material things as wood and stone, and such unspiritual and base objects as the images really represent, as if they were right and worthy recipients of human devotion and right and worthy ends for human effort. Human beings ought to devote themselves to the highest objects and most spiritual ideals which they meet in the course of their experience, and not to lower and baser ones. Yet thousands of civilized people, who would despise idols of wood and stone, nevertheless pursue a thoroughly idolatrous life to-day, in devotion to aims and impulses not a bit better than the gods of savages or nobler than the idols used in corrupt and immoral forms of religious worship.

But there are other gods which men have worshipped and still do worship, which are not of this debased and "idolatrous" sort, but of a more "philosophic" kind. Students of human nature and history have constantly observed that men's desires and the tendencies of communities and peoples are by no means always or altogether materialistic. On the contrary, they can be graded into a wide

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variety of higher and lower types. And many such students or "philosophers" have sketched out a system of ideals which they have formed by reflecting on the different types of human conduct, and selecting what they considered the highest and most useful ; and just as the idolaters have come to believe that the world is really influenced for better or worse by the idols which they have invented and obey, so these philosophers have often been led to think that mankind and the world at large can be regulated, and perhaps are really meant to be regulated, by the ideals which they have discovered. So they put before men as objects of their devotion a "spirit" or ideal which they have formed by the consideration of the best which they can find in Nature—whether human nature, or nature in the broader sense of all that can be observed and learned of the universe in which we dwell.

This kind of "philosophic" religion marks in two ways a great advance upon idolatry. First it is based upon some sort of ethical standard ; in simpler words its objects of devotion are selected upon the principle of deliberate choice and approval, instead of arising at haphazard from any of the numerous impulses of mankind, which may lead to either good or evil indifferently. And, secondly, it is always capable of progress and enlargement, as its followers' ideas of good and evil develop ; and in point of fact, though this kind of religion has perhaps never succeeded on a very large scale, or for long periods of time, in effecting a great improvement in actual conduct, it has made very important and lasting contributions to the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. And something is

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gained if men at least know what they ought to do, even if they have not yet acquired the power of putting that knowledge into practice.

Nevertheless the gods which men have discovered for themselves in such ways as have been sketched above are not exactly the kind of gods we usually mean when we ask the question, "Is there a God?" They are *gods*; what we want to discover is *a God*.

For the gods or objects of devotion of which we have been speaking do not satisfy human needs. The gods of the idolaters, if they make any great pretence to individuality and personal existence, are at best only a reflection of one side or part of human personality: at worst they represent its lowest side and most debased part. And the ideals of the non-Christian philosophers fail us because they are impersonal: their noblest conceptions of the Spirit of the Universe never quite succeed in producing a conviction of reality for ordinary people. Their ideas are often singularly beautiful, but the beauty is that of a row of statues in a museum, not that of living forces and active agents.

(ii) *Is there a Personal God?*

Yet when men speak of God, what they really mean is not a type or an idea but a person—and that person a "being" not only of wider power and deeper insight than themselves, but of the clearest individuality and most strongly marked character. Men are conscious of a feeling of superiority and mastery over their surroundings, however limited the range of their powers and however narrow the sphere in which they are able to exercise them. Man contrasts himself with "Nature" as though he were not part of it. In his

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little way he can control and rearrange certain bits of Nature. He is a "person"; Nature consists only of "things." So by "God" we really mean a being who in active and individual personality exceeds the whole forces of Nature, and man himself, as much as (and far more than) man himself surpasses his own environment.

What reasons are there to suppose that such a being exists, beyond the fact that most members of the human race, from the beginning of its history, have shown a tendency to grope after and often a desire to trust themselves to some such being?

(a) The world has to be accounted for: it was certainly not made by man. It is indeed probably too much to say that the universe must have been made by some one because otherwise it would not be here: it might possibly have been here always, if it simply existed, and that were all. But it does much more than exist: it works, and works upon a rational plan, in accordance with intelligible "laws" (that is, habits or principles); and further it changes and develops, again upon settled and ordered lines. These two facts may be summed up in the two words "science" and "evolution." And the first fact is most easily explained if we assume that a Mind arranged the universe, and the second fact if we assume that a Will directs and guides its progress—just as we require minds and wills to understand and control it. But minds and wills belong to personal beings; hence it is not unreasonable to suppose that that Mind and that Will belong to a great personal being, whom we call God.

(b) There is, further, some ground for supposing

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that this being to whom we thus attribute a supreme mind and a supreme will is also supremely free and supremely good. Man himself is conscious of feeling free within certain limits. There are innumerable circumstances over which he has little or no control, both in his own nature and in the world around in which his life is inevitably set ; and many of his most regular activities, such as those of breathing and digesting, need no conscious effort to maintain. Nevertheless he is constantly aware of making deliberate efforts of attention and selection between different objects ; he feels that he does exercise some power of free choice (see further in Chapter IX, § i).

This power is one of the characteristics which human beings do not appear to share with animals or vegetables. We possess material bodies, like inanimate things, and physical life in addition, like plants and beasts ; but in the possession of choice or " free-will " we seem to surpass the latter as much as they surpass dead matter. Consequently we have good ground for holding that this superadded gift of freedom is a " higher " endowment than the possession of mere life and consciousness. In fact, we begin to make a scale of values. And once we do that, it becomes almost impossible to deny to God, who in other respects appears so vastly the superior of mankind, the possession of that freedom of which we are conscious in ourselves. God cannot be just the name for a predetermined force working itself out in the world upon fixed and inevitable lines ; he is a being who regulates and directs the course of events according to a scheme and standard of his own choice.

And we may extend the argument. We make judg-

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ments of value in connection with moral conduct too ; we say, This is good or right, that is evil or wrong. The human conscience requires education and training as much as any other faculty, but there is no doubt that it exists. We have the knowledge of good and evil, and we know that from deep in our nature springs a sense of obligation and responsibility : we are so constituted that certain principles, such as truth and justice, kindness and unselfishness, have a binding claim on our loyalty. And if this is true of our finite human nature, it is no more possible to deny goodness to the supreme God than it is to deny him moral freedom.

(iii) *Can Men Know God ?*

If it be granted that there is a God, may we go further and claim that it is possible to know him ?

In countless ways men have tried to gain a knowledge of God, seeking after him “ if haply they might feel after him and find him.” Indeed “ he is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being.” And in many religions and philosophies progress has been made towards an understanding of God’s character and working, and towards the attainment of true communion between human spirits and the divine Spirit.

We may here naturally ask, Can it be proved that communication between human spirits and God is possible at all ? Is not all “ prayer ” a form of self-deception ?

The answer to this problem can only be very shortly given here.

(a) It is true that communion or communication

between man and God is not like communication between man and man. The process of communication is normally spiritual, and hardly ever takes the outward form of words or vision.

(b) It is true that the self-conscious part of the human mind is far from being the whole. The "subconscious" part of the mind is of far wider extent than the part which at any given time even a deliberate direction of attention or effort of memory can control or illumine. The subconsciousness is like an almost black sea of which small areas are lit up by the searchlight of self-consciousness: and self-deception is possible and even frequent, whereby "subjective" communication with the subconscious is mistaken for actual communication with independent spiritual beings.

(c) It may be freely admitted that you cannot absolutely *demonstrate* the genuineness and reality of religious experience in the same way that you can demonstrate the accuracy of a calculation in arithmetic. Nevertheless it must also be admitted that you cannot absolutely *demonstrate* the existence of God, nor the existence of the world, nor even the existence of yourself. Different philosophers have actually doubted all these things. These are all matters of experience, and if you distrust human experience and suspect human capacity for giving an accurate interpretation of the impressions we receive, knowledge of any kind is really impossible—not to say also the practical affairs of life. But the "common-sense" of mankind has tacitly decided that the genuineness of human experience and the validity of human thought must simply be taken for granted: and if this venture of faith may rightly be made in mundane matters

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there is no good reason why religious experience should not also be trustworthy, under proper safeguards.

(d) If it is once granted that God exists, it is almost inconceivable that it should not be possible to know him. If there is one thing above all others characteristic of human beings, it is their sociability—their need and habit of association with one another. The very continuance and progress of the race depends upon the intimacy of family life and the organization of mankind in groups and communities. Life is not human at all unless it takes a person outside himself: it is most human when its breadth and freedom are least circumscribed by limitations of interest and scope. A God who did not want to know and to be known by men would be something less than God.

(e) Having gone so far, we may now safely go further. One particular religious development, that through Judaism to Christianity, makes an absolutely unique claim regarding God's interest in the human race and desire to enter into communion with men.

The fundamental difference separating the religion of the Jews from all others was this: their religious leaders did not claim to be engaged upon a search for God, but claimed, on the contrary, that God was seeking after men. The movement and initiative were not human but divine in origin. "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you," might be taken as the motto of the Bible in both the Old and the New Testaments.

The Christian religion, which developed out of the Jewish and forms its natural fulfilment, makes a further claim. Not only does it repeat the Jewish assertion that certain knowledge of God should naturally be looked for in the quarter where he himself has chosen

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to declare himself, that is, in Jewish and Christian revelation ; it also claims that God has actually prosecuted his search for man's heart and love to the point of coming himself to earth in human form, and that the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, commonly called Christ, was neither more nor less than Almighty God incarnate, that is, under human conditions and with the mental, moral, and physical endowments of human beings.

Other religions have taught that the power of God has been manifested in successive incarnations of divine beings. But Christianity alone teaches that in a single historical figure the supreme God has wholly and finally and personally revealed himself to men : and this is very important, because if Christianity is true—if Jesus really was God himself, coming to seek and save his people—then God is actually already known by all those who know Jesus : and while all other religions represent the attempt of men groping after God in the dark, with very limited success in their search, Christianity alone and exclusively represents God's own free gift of his friendship and his power to men of good will.

(iv) *The Nature of God.*

What then does this religion teach us about God ? The Hebrew prophets first preached God as being the Father of his people. He had created them, chosen them to fulfil his own purposes, nurtured them, and disciplined them. In return he required of them willing obedience to his moral standards or " laws." God, said the prophets, is trustworthy, just, pure, merciful, and loving, as a good Father should be : and he expected his children to train themselves in those same

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qualities and virtues. The prophets were overwhelmingly convinced that righteousness and holiness were the foundations respectively of that all-embracing power and of that unapproachable majesty which they felt so acutely in all their consciousness of God.

Later on, the "wise" men, the writers of the "Wisdom literature" (see Chapter V, § iv (c)), prepared the way by their speculations for the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. They seem to have begun to feel a certain difficulty in thinking of God as a bare unit. We may indeed ask, how can a bare unit love or act? Love and action require an object; it is not possible to love nothing and to do nothing; that would mean simply not loving and not doing. And it is no answer to this difficulty to suggest that the object of God's love and action is this world which he has made, because the existence of God is not dependent on the existence of this world, and God lived and loved before ever the world came to be.

The "wise" men therefore began to speak and speculate about two aspects or qualities of God, which they came gradually to regard as in some way distinguishable from God; though indeed they did not actually personify them entirely. These were God's Wisdom and God's Word. The Wisdom was with God from the beginning and rejoiced with God over his creation, and may be said to represent God's purpose and heart: the Word was God's instrument of action and by it his loving purposes were carried into effect.

Christianity completed the revelation of the nature of God. Like the Jews from whom they first sprang, and like all philosophic believers in deity, whether ancient or modern, the Christians could not so much

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as conceive of there being more than one God : God is supreme and unique. Nevertheless the hard logic of fact and experience compelled the earliest disciples to acknowledge that Jesus was truly God. And unquestionably Jesus was distinguishable from him to whom he prayed and whom he called his Father : they were not just one person appearing in different forms or guises at different times, but two distinct "Persons" (as it came to be said later on when a word was wanted to express the matter). Thus, although the Father and the Son are not *separate*—you cannot think of the one existing apart from the other or conducting independent operations, and the very name Father implies the existence of his Son—yet they are *distinct*, because the one is not the other, and in certain operations they are engaged on different ends of the same action. The most obvious example is the Incarnation, in which the Son took human nature into himself and the Father planned and willed and caused him to do so.

But yet another distinction in the Godhead was revealed when Jesus ascended. While on earth he had become the guide and leader, the friend and support, of his followers, and they had learned to turn to him and rely upon him unquestioningly, not only in their difficulties but in their whole lives. Before he left them he promised that another Person should shortly take the place in their lives which he himself had come to fill. This Person he called the Holy Spirit. And very shortly after Jesus had left his followers, they realized that this Spirit had come upon them and into their hearts and lives.

A man's soul or spirit (the two words mean the same thing) is in a morally healthy individual the chief organ

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of direction and control in his being. But they were conscious now that a new spiritual Force and Power filled them, as long as they devoted themselves to co-operating with it. And this Power was personal. It was not just a mechanical influence which carried them along set channels by virtue of their abolishing their own power of will—as a man is carried along by a torrent if he throws himself into it. It was a spiritual partner and friend, co-operating with their own wills, and heightening and supporting their own powers. This Spirit was in fact the “Spirit of Jesus,” who had been present in the same way with Jesus through his whole earthly life, from its first moments, governing and directing and sustaining his human soul ; and had, even earlier, inspired and revealed the character of God to the Hebrew prophets and “wise” men. It was in fact the Spirit of God, who had been for long recognized by the Jews as an impersonal influence, but was now revealed to Christians as a distinct Person.

But just as we saw (following the experience of the earliest disciples) that the Father and the Son are distinguishable (though not separable), so the same fact holds good of the Spirit of God. He also is God, and God would be incomplete (and therefore not really God) without him : nevertheless he is a distinct Person in the divine being, and in the operations and activities of God works from his own angle and with his own particular method and sphere. For instance, he is the Soul of the Church, of which Christ is the Head and the first Person of the Godhead is the Father. In fact, as has been said, “all divine action upon the creature takes its origin from the Father, passes through the Son, and is completed in the Holy Spirit.”

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So the "transcendence" of God (i.e. his perfect independence of created things) may be most easily and obviously illustrated in the Father, and his "immanence" (i.e. his active influence pervading the universe from within) in the Holy Spirit; while both elements are clearly manifested in the Son, who by his incarnation revealed God under the conditions of the creature or created being, and thereby called men's attention to the fact that he is at once the pattern on which the world is made, its highest product, and the goal of its evolution.

These facts about God were for long accepted and believed without any special form of words being set apart to express them. But as time went on certain people (partly because they were deeply influenced by pagan philosophies, partly because the difficulty and complexity of the subject led them to rest a misplaced and disproportionate emphasis on particular parts of the Christian belief about God) introduced very misleading teaching about the Godhead which required urgent correction. Then it was that creeds were carefully and deliberately drawn up; and the truth was expressed by Christians in these words, that there is one "nature" or "substance" of God, which is wholly and indivisibly shared by each of the three "Persons," Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so that each is altogether God; but that none of the Persons can be separated from the others, and God is only complete in the union of the Three; for always the Son is being "eternally begotten" of the Father, and the Holy Spirit is perpetually "proceeding" from the Father through the Son. And this doctrine is called the doctrine of the "Trinity," or Three in One.

(v) *God and the World*

It has just been said that the "generation" of the second Person of the Trinity and the "procession" of the third Person are not events that once occurred in past time, but relationships which depend on everlasting processes within the being of God. Something of the same sort is true about creation. It is true that the world is not everlasting: it exists "in time," or in other words there was a point at which it began to be. But, on the other hand, it is quite absurd to imagine that God made the world thousands or millions of years ago and thereafter left it to follow its predetermined course like a machine. The proof of this is that, whereas a machine only repeats the same action over and over again, in the world new things are constantly happening.

Creation then is not a past and completed but a present and continuous activity of God. He sustains created things in existence every moment by an ever constant act of creative will, and if that act of will ceased, everything but God himself would cease to exist.

Certain points are worth remembering about the methods by which God works in creation. First, he creates (as we men would say) methodically. That is what makes scientific knowledge possible. We continually find particular circumstances and events associated in the natural world, insomuch that we are able to predict the occurrence of one (which we call an "effect") from the appearance of another (which we call a "cause"). The real cause is God, and the connections which we observe reveal the habitual lines

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upon which he works. These lines are often called "laws" of Nature, because mankind cannot change them, and if men wish to gain any degree of control over natural forces and events they must learn by observation the system upon which God works in nature, and subordinate their methods to that system. "Man can only govern Nature by obeying her."

Secondly, God is constantly creating new things—not only new specimens of an old type, but new types altogether. Sudden variations occur in one out of many individual specimens produced, as in the well-known case of the Shirley poppy. This was a single wild poppy which a man happened to notice about forty years ago, with fresh characteristics distinguishing it from other wild poppies, from the seed of which all the garden flowers now called Shirley poppies have been derived. In just the same way living things were introduced into the world by God. At some point far distant in the history of the world he united the principle of life to pieces of matter, and caused them to grow and reproduce their kind. Since then all the multifarious varieties of living things have developed and been differentiated, new types being constantly thrown out by the old, nature taking leap after leap as God created new species of objects. This is the doctrine of creative "evolution."

We now observe that there are several layers of existence in the natural world. At the bottom comes inanimate nature, governed solely by mechanical "laws" of chemistry and physics. Next comes organic nature, such as that of plants and animals, which is subject on one side to the same mechanical laws as dead matter, yet in addition has properties of its own, subject to

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distinct "laws" characteristic of living bodies. Next comes mankind, subject to all the previous "laws" of nature, yet again possessing properties peculiar to itself, with their appropriate modes of action. Thus a human body can be burnt or dissected, just as dead matter can be : and it is subject to laws of growth and reproduction similar in principle to those which govern the life of vegetables : nevertheless a man is more than just dead matter, and more than just a living organism ; he is a conscious agent.

These facts help to explain the difficulty which has been commonly felt about "miracles." We have seen that God works in nature by habit, or "natural law." But we must also observe that he has different sets of "laws" for different layers or levels of existence, and thus what would be "miraculous" in the sphere of dead matter is no more than "natural" in the sphere of organic life. And since the nature of God is infinitely higher than the nature of man, it is easy to perceive that when God is dealing with new circumstances he would "naturally" employ new principles. So the introduction of life into a world of dead matter was a miracle : science cannot (and does not attempt to) explain the origin of life : instead it simply records the fact. And in truth the occurrence of every genuinely fresh species from an existing type is miraculous from the human point of view.

With this in mind we are not surprised that in the unique circumstances of God living a human life on earth, in the person of Jesus Christ, he is recorded to have worked a number of "miracles." They are simply the "natural" application of higher principles to the special circumstances to which they properly

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belong : they are “supernatural” only because they are above the nature of ordinary men. And a similar argument holds good of any authenticated miracles which God has wrought through common men ; they represent his special method of dealing with special circumstances ; and if we knew as much as God does of the circumstances, we could no doubt have predicted the occurrence of the miracles.

CHAPTER II

THE INCARNATION

(i) *The Meaning of the Incarnation*

FOR us men and for our salvation, Christ our God, the divine Son, was made man. We need not here discuss the reasons why he took this step : we are only concerned now to consider what it means and what it involved.

We have already, in speaking of the Trinity, distinguished between the divine Person and the divine nature. The technical description of the Incarnation is that the Second Person of the Trinity assumed a second nature, that of manhood, in addition to the nature which he had as God ; and accordingly, as for every human being a body is specially formed and united by God with a soul, which body and soul are henceforth the special property of that particular person and his means of self-expression, so for this divine Person a human body was specially formed in the womb of the blessed Mary and a human soul united with it—the human body and soul of incarnate God.

What do we mean by human nature ? We each have a body, which is made of material substance and is subject to the laws of such substances. It can be acted upon by, and it reacts to, material stimulus. The connection between this body and the soul is obscure ; no one has yet been able to trace the manner of it. But the fact that this connection exists, and that the soul

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is a distinct thing from the body, is indisputable. When, for instance, a part of the body is touched, or material waves stimulate the ear, the physical consequence is simply that mechanical changes result in the body; nervous currents are set in motion which affect the brain and in turn produce further consequences in different parts of the body. But at the same time the soul or mind receives sensations of touch or of hearing: the soul (not the brain) is the medium in which man actually feels and perceives, experiences and thinks. So human nature really means the double instrument of body and soul in and by which mankind thinks, feels, acts, and lives—the composite organ of human experience. Neither the body alone nor the soul alone is a human being; the two together in co-operation form the means and seat of personal life, and mark the limits within which human capacity can be exercised.

When therefore we say that Christ took human nature, what we mean is that the divine Person, the Son of God, assumed the means of undergoing human experience—made himself able to think and feel and act and live in the same way and within the same limits of capacity as human beings. He did not cease to live and act in the divine sphere and nature; but made for himself in addition an opportunity of living and acting in the manner and sphere of men also.

We may illustrate this from what raises probably the most difficult problem in connection with the Incarnation—our Lord's consciousness. Does he, since the Incarnation, possess two centres of consciousness? On the one hand, the possession of two separate centres of consciousness seems to our limited intelligence to

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imply almost necessarily a double personality : and we know that he is only one Person, since otherwise our Redeemer, Jesus, would not be the Son of God and therefore would not possess the power to save us. On the other hand, if he had not a human mind with all its limitations, he would not be genuinely human, and therefore again he could not save us who are men, because he would not be one of us.

The difficulty is largely caused because people think more of Christ's natures than of Christ himself. The truth is just that Christ, without any cessation of his personal divine experience (if we may use the word) which he had in his divine nature, condescended to be humanly present on earth and to engage in another actual personal experience of human life and action and knowledge, with all their special limitations and with all their special opportunities. This human experience indeed formed part of the activity and consciousness of the one divine Person, Christ our God ; but his human nature, consisting of true body and true soul, marked off, conditioned, stamped, and differentiated that part of his total experience which was human (because his body and soul were the medium of it) from that part of his total experience which belonged to his divine nature.

The Church is absolutely committed to the following articles : (*a*) that Christ is truly God in the same sense as the Father is God (this was denied by the Arians) ; (*b*) that he took a genuine human soul as well as a genuine human body (this was denied by the Apollinarians) ; (*c*) that though his two natures are distinct he is one indivisible Person (the Nestorians attributed to our Lord two personalities, a man and a

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God, working in a sort of close moral partnership); and (d) that his human nature remains distinct and was not fused into his divine nature and therein swallowed up (as was asserted by the Monophysites).

It is reasonably safe to add that while amongst us here as man, Christ extended the range of human action through the veritable perfection of his own humanity—that sacred body and soul which were appropriated organically to his divine Person—and raised human capacity to the pitch of grasping and utilizing some of the higher principles belonging to a sphere or “nature” ordinarily beyond the reach and comprehension of mere men. This extension, it is clear from the record of the gospels, was strictly limited to the capacity of Christ’s human nature. For instance, the most striking miracle in the gospels (the raising of Lazarus) is explicitly recorded to have been done by God the Father in answer to Christ’s prayer (*St. John* xi. 41–2). It was therefore not, strictly speaking, a direct act of the incarnate Christ, but a divine answer to human petition.

Beyond these truths most speculation on the Person of Christ tends to be unprofitable.

(ii) *The Virgin Birth*

The Bible states that when Christ became man he did not suddenly appear full-grown in human flesh, but underwent the whole experience of humanity from the initial stages of individual human existence. He was conceived in the womb of his chosen vessel of grace, the Jewish virgin Mary, and in due course of time was born in the stable of an over-crowded inn at Bethlehem.

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In one way his birth was different from other human births ; he had no human father. This is sometimes denied in modern times by those who do not think such a thing possible—or rather, who do not think it probable that God would have acted in such a way. We can only reply to such objectors, that the early Christians whose testimony is recorded in the Bible certainly believed that Christ was “born of a pure virgin” ; there is no historical evidence whatever against this belief, which quite obviously was understood by the primitive Christians to depend on the word of Mary herself, given to her family and nearest friends.

It is, moreover, easy to see that the circumstances of Christ’s entry into the world were different from those of other men’s births. For one thing he existed already in another sphere as the divine Son ; this puts his conception at once in a distinct class where distinct principles or “laws” might be expected to be manifested. For another thing, his will was not to perpetuate human nature as it was before his coming, but to re-create true humanity as God wills that it should be. The human race, apart from Christ, is subject to a certain weakness or disease of its nature, of which we shall have more to say in Chapter X. This is, strictly speaking, “unnatural” and “inhuman,” the result of sin : and the people who knew him are agreed that our Lord was entirely free from any symptom of moral imperfection in his human nature ; indeed, his object in being born at all was to re-create a humanity without imperfection or flaw, associated with his own Person, so that the children of men might be born again, by personal union with himself, into that perfect manhood.

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Therefore, according to Christian teaching and Bible record, his manhood, though "natural" (that is, like other men's) in growth and development, was "supernatural" in first origin; it came into existence by operation of laws which belong to, and are "natural" to, a higher sphere of operation—he was indeed "born of woman" (*Galat.* iv. 4), but "not of bloods" (i.e. existing physical elements, *St. John* i. 13). There is a real sense in which he was not "David's son" (*St. Mark* xii. 35), but "a new creation" (*2 Cor.* v. 17): he was "conceived by the Holy Ghost."

(iii) *The Life of Jesus on Earth*

Jesus (to give our Lord the earthly name by which he was called) was born somewhere between the years 8 and 6 B.C. For about thirty years he lived a perfect life toward God and man; working at the trade of carpentry or masonry in a sheltered village in the hills of Galilee for his own support and that of his mother; communing with nature, his fellow men, and God; learning as man to love and understand life in its deepest and its broadest meaning.

Then, probably in the year A.D. 26, he took the first steps towards founding his Church. The prophet John the Baptist began to draw vast crowds into the desert to hear him preach a mission calling for a moral reformation; and Jesus joined in the movement, showing his religious sympathies by compelling John to "baptize" him as he did his other adherents. It is possible that only at this moment did Jesus come to a full human realization of who he himself was and wherein his own mission lay: at any rate, our Lord's baptism was followed by a period of intense tempta-

tions bearing on the nature of his powers and the manner in which they were to be exercised.

These temptations quelled, by the twofold discipline of fasting and meditation, Jesus made a beginning, with one or two friends, by preaching and baptizing in the same manner as John the Baptist. But in the spring of the next year (A.D. 27) his action in "cleansing" the Temple at Jerusalem, when the city was crowded with pilgrims for the Passover, indicated that he meant to adopt an independent line of procedure; and shortly afterwards he began his "Galilean ministry."

This was an entirely original venture. (*a*) Instead of waiting for the people to come out into the desert to hear him, he journeyed constantly himself and sought them out, in their towns and villages, on the highways and in the hedges, at their work or their leisure or their worship—for a great feature of this ministry or mission was that everywhere Jesus sought opportunity to address the people in their village meeting-houses or "synagogues." (*b*) He organized certain of his followers into a body of twelve "apostles," acting as his personal attendants and assistants. (*c*) Instead of merely preaching against particular moral failings, he instituted a searching examination into the bed-rock principles of religious practice, and enlarged and enhanced immensely the range and quality of moral duties (see Chapter IX, § ii and iii).

Moreover, this was all accompanied by an amazing personal certitude and authority which staggered his hearers even more than did the astonishing graciousness which went with it. He quoted no authorities; he simply said things so obviously true, and did things

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so obviously right, that no one could reasonably pick any hole. And he backed up his teaching and example and personal claim to man's adherence by a number of "signs," chiefly though not entirely miracles of bodily healing, which showed both his intention and his power to put right what was wrong and to create a radical change in the lives and characters of those who followed him.

Crowds did follow Jesus from every town and village of Galilee, and even from places further afield ; but much of the interest which he aroused was quite superficial, and many a time did Jesus administer a salutary check to the popular enthusiasm for him, and even repel ill-considered offers of personal service. Many sought him only from curiosity, or the desire to better their physical state ; and some from political motives, in the hope that he might head a successful revolution. The number of people who underwent a genuine spiritual conversion was comparatively small.

Moreover, Jesus made enemies. The governors of Galilee and Judæa (Herod Antipas and Pontius Pilate) were both men of thoroughly bad character and perfectly unscrupulous : just about this very time Herod murdered John the Baptist. But more dangerous still was the enmity of the Pharisees, the most important and powerful religious "sect" (i.e. school of thought) in the whole of Jewry outside the actual city of Jerusalem.

The Pharisees had in the past done a wonderful work for religion. They had in particular reduced the whole of life to spiritual system ; but ended by treating all the details of their own system as being no less necessary to salvation than the primary principles of religion,

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and the full practice of it as being the only road to God. Their want of proportion and over-elaboration of doctrine and practice, together with their hide-bound exclusiveness, had produced a condition of pettifying formalism and blindness to clear spiritual issues; and in many cases had led to hypocritical worldliness and shameless covetousness: for only a man of some means and leisure could fill the position of true-bred Pharisaic superiority. Jesus' broad humanity and vigorous freshness alarmed them: his disregard of formal regulations and his personal authoritativeness infuriated them.

For these different reasons Jesus withdrew from most of his public work after a year of the Galilean ministry had been completed; and keeping for the most part in secluded or heathen districts devoted himself to the work of training the twelve apostles who were to carry his principles abroad throughout the then civilized world.

(iv) *The Foundation of the Church*

Jesus knew very well that in the divine providence his own death and resurrection were required as the central sacrifice in which all other sacrifice and self-sacrifice should be gathered up to form the spiritual bridge between mankind, with its second nature of sin superimposed upon the divine creation, and the immaculate holiness of God's love. He would never go forth himself in the flesh to the conversion of the world. He therefore bent his efforts in the last year of his life on earth (A.D. 28-29) to perfecting the instrument by which he intended to effect that conversion.

He had already selected from his followers twelve

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who should form the groundwork of his Church ; he had employed and tested and with one deliberate exception approved them. He had nevertheless carefully refrained from forcing their convictions, and it was only now, after they had passed through a period of great spiritual uncertainty and bafflement, that the evidence of their continued observation of him and spiritual intimacy with him forced them to the definite conclusion that he was " the Son of God." Although the express realization of his divine personality which their belief involved does not seem to have come fully home to the disciples until after the Resurrection, Jesus accepted their conviction, and began to prepare them for the events which he himself so clearly foresaw and the work for which he destined them : he had at last secured in Peter, supported by his brother apostles, the Rock he needed upon which to build his Church.

In the autumn Jesus and his followers left Galilee and took up their residence within easy reach of Jerusalem. More than once he visited the immediate neighbourhood of the city, at increasing risk. In the next spring he threw out a deliberate challenge to his enemies by attending the great feast of the passover with every possible feature of publicity. The Pharisees persuaded the priestly aristocracy (Sadducees) which held supreme religious influence in the city to combine with themselves for his destruction ; and Jesus, again deliberately, by disappointing the renewed expectations of his popular bodyguard of enthusiastic pilgrims, and allowing the traitor Judas to inform the chief priests of his movements, suffered himself to be taken prisoner. The contemptible Roman governor was bullied into condemning him, on a charge which every-

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body concerned knew to be trumped up out of malicious spite ; and as the lambs for the passover sacrifice were being killed the Son of God was crucified, a willing victim for the redemption of the whole world.

For the moment the apostles were stunned at this apparently commonplace end to the career of God's anointed Messenger. But from the morning of the third day (reckoning inclusively, as ancients reckoned time) those who had enjoyed his closest and most intimate friendship began to experience a series of events which convinced them once and for all that the power of Jesus reached beyond the grave, and that their own faith must similarly pierce beyond that arbitrary barrier. His tomb was found upon investigation to be empty but for the discarded grave-clothes, and Jesus himself repeatedly appeared in tangible bodily form, though with supernatural mystery in the manner of his coming and going, now to one or two, now to the eleven apostles, and once at least to a considerably larger body of his old Galilean disciples.

For forty days these events continued, while Jesus, who had beforehand prepared the apostles for his departure, and the subsequent coming of another spiritual Presence to be their Friend and Stand-by in his place, gave them his final instructions. Then, at the moment when, had the appearances to the several witnesses really been mental hallucinations,¹ the manifestations might have been expected to be multiplied—under the stress of rising excitement, and as the band of disciples

¹ The view that the appearances of Christ after his resurrection were immaterial, and purely subjective (that is, not perceived by the organs of sense but reflected or "suggested" to those organs by the minds of the witnesses, which are supposed to have been directly conscious of some purely spiritual presence of Christ), is (a) unscientific,

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grew larger—Jesus left them. In the act of blessing he was taken up from the earth and a cloud enveloped him, veiling his passage from the last earthly limitations to the celestial freedom of human life in glory (see Chapter XII, § iv). His ascension, not his crucifixion, was the end of Jesus' earthly life, as St. Luke very properly observed (*Acts* i. 1, 2).

Ten days later, as the apostles were assembled on the morning of the Jewish feast of Pentecost, the promised Spirit came, and the Catholic Church which Christ had painfully formed was thereby brought to the birth, to be henceforward in this world of time and space the main instrument of her glorified Lord in his spiritual conquest of the world. Through this Church true spiritual conviction was destined to be wrought out in the hearts of men, and genuine godliness attained; through it human ideals were to be sifted and human attainments tested and judged; through it the principles of righteousness should be further advanced and better applied to the varied circumstances of human conduct and activity; and through it the souls and bodies of men should be fed with spiritual food, and the gospel, or knowledge of all God's love, should be carried to every corner of the world and presented to every people, nation, and language under heaven.

because contrary to the express evidence of the eye-witnesses (*St. Luke* xxiv. 36—43 : (b) unsatisfactory, because it tends to ignore the redemption of the bodily element in human nature : (c) of doubtful morality, because the apostles' belief in the resurrection of Christ's body was unquestionably the foundation of their faith and the keystone of their gospel, and Christ apparently created that belief in them of set purpose, and chiefly by means of his resurrection appearances,

CHAPTER III

THE BODY OF CHRIST

(i) *The Catholic Church and Christ*

THE principles upon which Christ built his Church may be seen from a study of the New Testament. The Church is institutional, hierarchical, sacrificial, and sacramental.

(a) *Institutional.* It has often been asserted that Christ never intended to found a close-knit organization, but only a "movement"; that he meant to launch into the world not a Church but a set of ideas. But it is now becoming more and more commonly recognized by recent scholars of every shade of opinion that, at any rate, whatever Christ intended, what he did was to launch a Church; and that his followers, even of the first generation—those who wrote the books of the New Testament and those upon whose personal experience the writers founded their narratives and based their conclusions—believed that the Church was no accident, but was indeed the deliberate creation of Christ's will. In other words, the epistles of the New Testament and the *Acts of the Apostles* assume that the Church is, by Christ's intention, a definite organized body of believers, with terms of membership and corporate activity and corporate discipline; and the gospels represent Christ as teaching doctrines, laying down principles, and performing actions, which imply the same thing.

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The Christian Church became thus the successor of the older Jewish Church. The Jews rightly believed themselves to have been chosen as the recipients of a fuller knowledge of God's character and claims than other nations, and certain of their thinkers realized that this knowledge was a trust bestowed upon them for the ultimate benefit of the whole human race. Indeed, it is obvious that the Jews have contributed far more than any other nation to modern notions of practical religion and morality, just as the ancient Greeks were entrusted with a fuller revelation in the realms of art and of speculative reasoning, and the Romans (and their successors) in the realms of law and organization, and of architecture.

The Christian Church took over this religious trust, with enormous additions, from the Jews, and was sent out to exercise it as the earthly representative of Christ. The Church was not formed by a voluntary association of the early converts. On the contrary, it was formed by Christ, out of a remnant chosen from among the members of the ancient Jewish Church ; it had as its nucleus a dozen apostles, a few women who ministered to him, and a small number of other adherents ; and converts, when they came, "were added" to the already existing community (*Acts* ii. 41, 47, etc.). Consequently the Bible teaches that the natural way in which men may be united to Christ and share his active life is for them to become genuine and convinced members of this Church. And as when we want to move our position, or to engage in some occupation, we use our legs and arms and other organs of our bodies, so Christ, the Head of the Church, employs the Church as his "body," the executive instrument

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of his work on earth ; it was called his " body " (*Ephes.* i. 22, 23 ; iv. 11-16 ; 1 *Cor.* xii. 12 ff. ; etc.) because Christians believed it was intended to be the concrete embodiment of his purposes in the world.

It follows that when a person has become a member of this Church, nothing can make him cease to be a member, except the judgement of God drawn down upon him by final persistence in unrepented sin. The fact of physical death makes not the slightest difference to the fact of membership : those who have fallen asleep in Christ—the great majority of Christians—are still members of him and of the Catholic Church.

It also follows that on earth there may be for the time unworthy members within the area of the Church's ministrations ; and also lapsed members who have withdrawn or have been excluded from her ministrations. The former must await the judgement of God to determine their position ; meantime they are still members. The latter are separated from the permanent natural life of the body : either by secession they have renounced certain of their privileges, or by acquiescence in schism they have failed to claim them, or by excommunication they have been deprived of them. Nevertheless they are still members, at least in the sense that the body of the Church is at present maimed and incomplete without their complete restoration.

(b) *Hierarchical.* Even from the early days of Christ's Galilean ministry he had set apart certain of his disciples for special functions, and thus introduced grades among his followers—not primarily grades of privilege or private advantage, but grades of ministry, and variation in duty. In this he was merely following Jewish precedent, and in fact applying the constant

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principle of revelation, that advance should be made through selected bodies or persons for the ultimate benefit of the whole of mankind.

Christ then formed a body of twelve with the distinctive title of "apostles." To them he promised the right to govern and make authoritative prohibitions and regulations ("binding and loosing"), and in general to be leaders of his Church, both in taking action, and in suffering persecution, and in bearing witness to the gospel truth. He trained them in the practice of ministerial functions, and finally authorized them to act as dispensers of certain means of grace in his name.

In addition to the Twelve he also made occasional use of the services of others for restricted ends, as when he sent out seventy disciples to preach and heal ; and he accepted the ministrations of a little band of women to supply his personal necessities. These later on proved respectively important precedents for the establishment of an order of the clergy with restricted functions, and for the recognition of a class of ministers (including women) to perform subordinate duties contributing to the due administration of word and sacraments by the apostles (see Chapter IV, § ii).

(c) *Sacrificial*. The central feature of Jewish worship had been sacrifice. Among the pastoral ancestors of the nation the sacrifices offered had consisted of animals ; and the rite seems to have developed from a feeling that the life of the victim (which was believed to reside in its blood) was in a special way the property of the deity, and might therefore not be arrogantly appropriated by men. When an animal was to be slaughtered for food it was thought necessary to draw

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off the blood and make a distinct offering of this to God, the carcase being retained for human use. In course of time the act of sacrifice came to be regarded as in itself pleasing to God, and other forms of offering were introduced ; hence animal sacrifice came to be offered for its own sake, apart from the need of food. Later on, with a growing sense of their own imperfection, the Jews developed the belief that the animal victim might be in some sense a substitute for the person or nation in whose name it was offered, and certain sacrifices acquired something of the character of acts of self-dedication and atonement.

According to the gospels, Christ accepted and developed this idea of sacrifice, and regarded his own death not merely as an act of voluntary submission and an example of unselfish idealism, but as a sacrificial offering made on behalf of all mankind. Certainly the earliest generation of Christians so regarded it. It was the perfect offering of a perfect life, laid at the feet of God without reserve, for him to put to the fullest and most perfect use. It therefore was the true and everlasting sacrifice which all previous sacrifices had foreshadowed ; in it all other acts of sacrifice were summed up, and through it and by virtue of it all other human lives might be brought in self-sacrifice to the feet of God.

And at the Last Supper, on the night before his passion, he instituted, and commanded his apostles to continue, a perpetual memorial or presentation of his sacrifice before God and man, in the offering of his Body and Blood under the forms of bread and wine. This sacrificial rite is the only form of common worship which Christ himself is known to have ordered,

and the only distinctively Christian form of worship recorded in the Bible.

(d) *Sacramental*. The fundamental idea of a sacrament is that, subject to divine ordinance, spiritual gifts and benefits may be conveyed to fit recipients by means of outward "signs," such as certain specified actions or objects. By the Hellenistic Gentiles, for instance, among whom St. Paul chiefly worked, it was believed that by sharing in the feast upon a victim offered in sacrifice to a deity, the participants received a share in the life and powers of that deity.

Christ taught a very similar doctrine. He sometimes used outward signs himself in conveying spiritual healing; and he expressly ordained two sacraments of which he personally fixed the details of the outward signs to be employed. First, the sacrificial rite just mentioned included the command to eat his Body and drink his Blood, with a view to participation in the power of his triumphant human life. Secondly, he ordained the rite of Christian baptism as the means whereby converts were to be admitted to the society of believers and to fellowship in his body the Church.

It is more surprising that he is recorded to have adopted this principle than the three already discussed, because there is hardly a trace of *sacramentalism* in the Jewish religion. The Jews were perfectly familiar with the idea of *symbolism*, by which men express their own thoughts and feelings by outward acts; but there is little hint in the Old Testament of any expectation that God would bestow spiritual blessings upon man by similar means. Consequently strenuous efforts have been made to prove that the sacramental principle was introduced into Christianity after our Lord's time by

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St. Paul or some one else in close touch with Gentile thought. Yet the facts remain that sacraments were unquestionably used in the earliest days of the Church in Palestine, before St. Paul became an apostle, or even a Christian ; and that their forms and associations are in truth Jewish, and not Gentile ; so that it is hardly possible to deny them a place in the original gospel of Christianity.

Indeed it has been maintained that each of the four cardinal principles of the Catholic Church—those of institutional organization, hierarchical government, sacrificial worship, and sacramental grace—are due to illegitimate developments introduced at some time subsequent to the death of Christ. Nevertheless there is now an increasing tendency among scholars and critics to admit that all four principles are inextricably embedded in the New Testament—that not only were they practised in the apostolic age, but that already in the days when the several books of the New Testament were written (see Chapter VI) the Church believed them to have been derived from Christ.

The authors of these contentions are therefore faced with the astonishing paradox that, according to their theories, these principles were accepted unquestionably as Christ's principles by the very apostles who had been trained by Christ, and yet he had not taught them. Such a position is really most unlikely to prove tenable for long. Already the advanced guard of Continental Protestant critics has taken the further inevitable step of admitting that these Catholic principles were indeed derived from Christ's teaching ; and they seek to blunt the edge of this admission by contending that Christ himself was in certain

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respects a mistaken fanatic. The fundamental Catholic principles of the Church can, in fact, only be proved wrong by rejecting not merely the Bible but Christianity.

(ii) *The Catholic Church and the Holy Spirit*

While Christ was with the apostles they had learned to rely and depend upon him without question or limitation as their one and only guide, philosopher, friend, and stand-by. When he was about to leave them he promised that he would send the Holy Spirit to fill the same place in their lives that he had previously occupied himself. On the day of Pentecost as they were assembled they were conscious of certain symbolic outward signs—the sound of a rushing wind (the word “spirit” originally means “breath”) and the appearance of tongues like flames upon each of them. And they knew from that moment that the promised Holy Spirit had come, not merely on account of the outward signs, but because they found themselves in confident possession of all those powers for which they had previously looked to Jesus to supply their own lack, and were conscious of being “one with Christ” in a way and to a degree that they had never before experienced at all.

(a) *Personal endowments.* The inspiration of the Old Testament prophets had taken the form of an intensification of their natural human faculties—a quickening of their spiritual sensitiveness and a deepening of their moral insight. So now in the Christian Church, which is the “covenanted sphere” of the Holy Spirit’s inspiration, the same principle ruled. The members of the Christian community upon whom the Spirit came

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(for his gifts were not bestowed upon the apostles only, but upon all believers, according to their spiritual order and function) were not inspired mechanically, like spinning jennies or gramophones, to act and speak upon a fixed and predetermined plan ; but were rather empowered to exercise more fully all the forces of their nature and personality in intelligent moral co-operation with this new divine Friend who reunited them to Christ.

It is true that some of the early manifestations of the Holy Spirit's presence, such as "speaking with tongues" or supernatural gifts of physical healing, seem at first sight quite beyond the range of any human faculties. Yet the latter, though uncommon, have never died out in the Church and have even been found outside it ; and the former appears to mean a form of ecstatic utterance made under stress of very strong spiritual emotion, and usually in sounds unintelligible to any audience that might be present (see *I Cor. xiv.*).

And since modern psychological records contain apparent instances of persons under the influence of abnormal conditions reproducing intelligibly statements once casually overheard (but neither memorized nor even understood) in languages of which in their normal consciousness they had no knowledge whatever, it is reasonable to conclude that the utterances of the apostles on the actual day of Pentecost (*Acts ii. 4-13*) were of the same general character as the speaking with tongues described elsewhere, though interspersed with praises of God in foreign languages which any Jew might have overheard at any gathering of pilgrims. This interpretation of the narrative is strengthened by the facts therein recorded that the

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utterances were not apparently exhortations addressed to the people but praises of God, and that their ecstatic nature laid the apostles open to a charge of drunkenness. If such a view is taken, any thought of a temporary mechanical inspiration in the primitive Church may be confidently dismissed.

But in any case the characteristic form of the Holy Spirit's inspiration is to be found in powers of a more everyday kind, which result in the production of truly Christ-like lives—"till Christ be formed in you" (*Galat.* iv. 19). His gifts offered to all consist in such things as reverence, trust, and self-devotion ; insight, understanding, and judgement ; moral strength, courage, and perseverance. He teaches Christians true prayer ; he sheds upon them spiritual peace and joy ; he instils into them the supreme virtue of love—love in its Christian sense, embracing the various aspects of kindness and gentleness, meekness and patience, constancy and expectation, and even a certain resolute firmness and discipline towards both oneself and others. Indeed, the Church is called holy because it is the Holy Spirit's school of holiness.

With certain of the powers just mentioned we may connect the particularly prophetic gifts of "inspiration" by which the apostles and their companions (together with their successors the Fathers and theologians of the Church) interpreted the facts of the life of Christ in the light of his teaching, and thus learned to comprehend the vital elements of the gospel which it was their duty to preach. Moreover, the exercise of such gifts was not merely individual and speculative, but also corporate and critical. History shows repeated instances of the sound judgements passed by

ecclesiastical leaders in conference, supported by the general sense of Christendom, both upon literary productions claiming an undeserved place in the canon of Holy Scripture, and upon philosophical theories either involving a misleading presentation of the historical facts of the gospel or attempting to explain them away. Without this power of inspired corporate judgement the Church would have had neither Bible nor creeds with which to test and guide its teaching.

(b) *Ministerial endowments.* So far the Holy Spirit's work in the Church has been considered in but one aspect, as imparting Christ's gifts and graces to human hearts, whereby they are enabled to rise to higher spiritual levels. But his work has another aspect equally important. Christ by his Spirit works not only in men, but through men. Virtue flows out of him into Christian hearts not to be locked up therein, but to issue forth again in the conquest and redemption of the world. The Catholic Church is the Body of Christ, his organ and instrument of earthly activity.

All Christians then are priestly—mediators between God and men, in the name of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian person is a lantern through which the divine light of Christ is meant to shine abroad, a conductor by which his virtue is intended to be spread, a sacrifice in which his sacrifice is to be maintained in never-ceasing efficacy. The Christian's union with Christ in the Holy Spirit is not intended to be merely selfish, but as a means whereby Christ himself still works and suffers and triumphs among mankind.

Furthermore, if the individual is priestly, so is the body. By Christ's own appointment, as we have seen,

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it has executive officers commissioned to act in certain matters as "ministerial priests," that is, as ministers and representatives of Christ, because ministers and representatives of the whole body of Christ. And the Holy Spirit's gifts include certain special endowments which are not common to all Christians. "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? If they were all one member, where were the body?" (1 Cor. xii. 17, 19). The Holy Spirit has bestowed certain particular gifts on some members for particular functions, the grace of the apostolate, of prophecy, of teaching, and so on (1 Cor. xii. 28). Prominent among these, both in the New Testament and in the later history of Christianity, is the grace of ministerial priesthood, exercised by apostles and bishops and other members of the "clergy."

The sacramental system therefore represents nothing less than the means whereby the Holy Spirit conveys certain gifts from Christ to mankind, using men as his agents. Any Christian may in case of need act as his minister of holy Baptism, the sacrament by which a person is made a member of the body of Christ. But most sacraments are administered by the Holy Spirit through the clergy, who have derived his authority through the apostles to whom Christ first said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (*St. John* xx. 21-23). They are, and always have been, his ministers in Confirmation and conferring priestly character by Ordination, and in giving God's absolution and blessing, and in the consecration of the Eucharist to be Christ's Body and Blood.

CHAPTER IV

THE AUTHORITY AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH

(i) *The Apostolic Gospel*

THE Church, said St. Paul, was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets—a distinction of names and functions involving but little difference in the persons designated. And it is clear that from the very first, as soon as converts were known to have been made, or a community of Christians began to collect, in some fresh centre, then apostles were sent to organize and establish the new church on a permanent footing (e.g. *Acts* viii. 14 ; ix. 31-32 ; xi. 19-22). In this way every church was ordered either directly by apostles, or, as time went on and the proportion of apostles to churches grew ever smaller, by delegates whom an apostle selected and appointed for the purpose (e.g. *Titus* i. 5).

This close association of the apostles with the origin of every local congregation was the earliest guarantee in each place that the truth of the gospel was indeed being taught and preached there. The apostles were Christ's inspired witnesses (*St. John* xv. 26, 27). In their lifetime they were able by personal action to suppress tendencies towards adulteration of the pure word of God (e.g. *Galat.* i. 6-10 ; *Coloss.* ii. 6-23 ; *1 Tim.* i. 3-4). In the next century, when actual heresies broke out and new bodies were founded in

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opposition to the gospel, reference was still made to the teaching of the apostles as a test: the universal argument used against the heretics was that their doctrines were local and unapostolic—they had no pedigree—whereas the orthodox in every church throughout the world¹ were able to trace their gospel from generation to generation and from bishop to bishop, back to the particular apostle who had founded either their own church, or the mother church from which they were an offshoot. The fact of the succession, from the actual apostles, of bishops in orderly tenure of particular sees, was the only guarantee of gospel truth the Church claimed to possess at a time when the New Testament did not yet exist as an authoritative collected work.

By the middle of the second century the process had begun of making an authorized collection of apostolic books; and so the New Testament began to be formed. And though it was not till A.D. 397 that the contents of the New Testament were settled precisely as we have them to-day, the bulk of the books in our modern New Testament were generally accepted by about A.D. 200. From that time therefore the traditional teaching could be checked and supported by its agreement with those acknowledged records of primitive Christian experience in the apostolic age: and the New Testament became the natural, and practically speaking the only, touchstone by which the Church decided what was evangelical and apostolic, and what was otherwise.

Yet it must be remembered exactly wherein the

¹ Hence the name of "Catholic" arose for orthodox Christians. The word means by derivation "world-wide." It never means "universal" in the sense of "all-inclusive," but is always applied to the orthodox as opposed to the heretical.

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authority of the New Testament lay. The several books contained in it were treasured in the archives of different churches, and won general recognition in the early centuries solely on the ground that they were apostolic both in teaching and in origin. The four gospels were accepted because the origins of each were connected with the name and work of an apostle—Matthew, Peter, Paul, and John respectively (see further in Chapter VI)—and because their teaching was agreeable to the apostolic tradition. The many apocryphal gospels were rejected, and most deservedly, because their claims to apostolic authorship or origin were clearly disproved both by their history, and still more by the unevangelical character of their contents. Similar reasons led to the acceptance of the *Acts*, the thirteen epistles of St. Paul, *1 Peter*, and *1 John*. During the third century the authorship both of *Hebrews* and of *Revelation* was disputed; and consequently these books were not generally accepted as Scripture until later, even though their contents were approved.

The Church then quite certainly founded its gospel upon the authority of the apostles—whether their authority were sought in the apostolic traditions and standards of religion preserved by the early generations of episcopal teachers in each church, or in the apostolic books belonging to separate churches which afterwards went to form the New Testament.

(ii) *The Apostolic Ministry of Grace*

The gospel therefore, whether preserved by bishops or in books, came from the apostles. But the ministry of divine grace which the bishops exercised was also

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derived from the apostles, no less than their gospel. In that fact lay the guarantee that through their ministry souls were being fed with those gifts of grace which Christ designed for his flock—a matter quite as important as sound doctrine. It is therefore desirable to trace briefly the development of the Christian ministry. And though the exact details are at some points obscure, the main course of the process is clear enough.

Immediately after Christ's ascension great importance was attached to the maintenance of the precise number of twelve apostles, and the vacancy caused by the secession and death of Judas Iscariot, the traitor, was filled up before the day of Pentecost by the choice of a substitute. But within little over twenty years we find that the number had been extended. It is true that the word "apostle" was sometimes used in a non-technical sense, meaning emissary (2 *Cor.* viii. 23) or perhaps missionary (*Rom.* xvi. 7, and in the early document called *Didache*, § 11); but it was certainly used of the two great missionary organizers Paul and Barnabas in the same sense as of the original Twelve, probably also of James, the Lord's "brother," and possibly of Silas. Yet the number of the apostles was still limited: Timothy, for instance, was certainly not an apostle in this sense, nor was the author of *Jude*; and one necessary qualification seems to have been to have actually seen the risen Christ, so as to provide personal evidence of his resurrection (*Acts* i. 21-22, and compare 1 *Cor.* xv. 7-9).

The apostles exercised general oversight both of teaching and of discipline and of administration, more particularly in those churches which they had themselves respectively organized; though on occasion as

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many of them as were available might be assembled to decide (with the assistance of other Christians of long standing) some question of fundamental principle, such as whether Gentiles could become Christians without first becoming Jews and submitting to the Jewish law (*Acts xv.*).

Quite soon the apostles found they needed assistance in the purely practical work of charitable administration at Jerusalem, and seven men were solemnly set apart for this work. They are commonly called the Seven Deacons. Other deacons were appointed elsewhere, and we find mention in the New Testament of at least one woman with the title. It simply means "servant," and refers to the subordinate duties of what we should call "lay" service which deacons were originally created to perform.

But the deacons very soon acquired a ministerial character, partly no doubt because there was need of subordinate liturgical officers, and partly because the men chosen for the office, and particularly the first seven, were men of prominent character and ability and quickly displayed great ministerial aptitude; so that by the time of St. Paul's later epistles the deacons are mentioned in such a way as to suggest that they were already reckoned a distinct clerical order. Deacons preached and baptized, but could not transmit the gift of the Holy Spirit (*Acts viii. 12-18*).

Superior to the deacons but still subordinate to the apostles were the "elders." This word is sometimes used, both in the New Testament and in later writings, in much the same way as our English word "Fathers." It meant primarily the older generation of believers, the "seniors," to whose instruction and authority

natural deference would be paid. This meaning of the word is apparent in *Acts* xv. 23 (those people were consulted who were apostles by office and "elders" in adherence to Christianity), and allusion is probably made to it in the titles applied to themselves by the authors of 2 and 3 *John*, and of 1 *Peter* (v. 1).

But the more usual sense attached to the word in the New Testament is that of a distinct order of ministers, whom the apostles appointed as permanent local clergy in the several churches (e.g. *Acts* xiv. 23). Their ordination conveyed to them the special grace of the Holy Spirit for the work of their office, which was to be overseers or "bishops," and to "feed the Church of God" (*Acts* xx. 28); and it is practically certain that the invariable form their ordination took was the laying on of the apostles' hands. In support of this conclusion we may refer to the undoubted fact that this method was adopted in the consecration to their office of the inferior grade of the seven "deacons"; to the words of St. Paul to Timothy (2 *Tim.* i. 6, where a special grace, or *charisma*, is expressly mentioned); and to the fact that the word used in *Acts* xiv. 23 for the "appointment" of elders by Paul and Barnabas is the word technically employed for "ordination" (including the laying on of hands) in the subsequent usage of Church writers.

It will be observed about these elders, or, to give them their Greek name, presbyters, that while their duties seem to correspond roughly with those of the clergy of a modern parish, they are nevertheless sometimes described in the New Testament as bishops. And it seems probable (though not certain) that they possessed authority to ordain others to the ministry. At

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any rate, Timothy had received the laying on of the hands not only of St. Paul, but also of "the presbytery," or body of presbyters (1 *Tim.* iv. 14); and it is quite beyond dispute that from the beginning of the second century the persons bearing the title of bishop were the regular ministers of ordination. It would therefore appear that in New Testament times there were no "priests," in the modern sense, possessing a restricted authority; but that the clergy consisted of (a) apostles; (b) occasional apostolic delegates with general powers, such as Timothy at Ephesus and Titus in Crete; (c) a body of local clergy in each church, called bishops or presbyters, to whom the apostles transmitted the powers of the Christian priesthood entire, subject only to general oversight by themselves; and (d) subordinate ministers called deacons.

For a few years, while many apostles were alive, important problems were referred to them for their decision by the local bishops. But as time passed the need arose for some other and more permanent provision to be made for the exercise of supreme authority. The apostles had already employed special delegates on occasion, as we have seen; apparently the next step they took was to appoint some one bishop out of the body of bishops in each church to succeed to their supremacy. The historical evidence points emphatically to this conclusion. In the next century different churches possessed lists of their own presiding ministers, right back to the apostles by whom they claimed that their first presiding minister had been appointed; and at any point at which material still exists for testing the accuracy of those lists which still survive, they can be vindicated as reliable.

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One change only had taken place. By the beginning of the second century there was only one bishop in each church, with a number of priests or presbyters working under him. If the view that has been taken in these pages is correct, the presbyters mentioned in the New Testament were all also bishops, in fact as well as in name ; but at some time between the years 60 and 100 A.D. the custom of having several bishops in each place had been discarded, with the approval of such apostles as still survived, and only the single presiding bishop had been retained. And while the name of bishop (since it actually meant overseer) was retained for that order of the clergy which had borne it previously, the title presbyter was extended to a new subordinate order of co-operating ministers (our modern "priests") who were given certain, but not all, of the powers of the old bishop-presbyters, and exercised them, in those early days of small and numerous bishoprics, in close dependence upon the bishop.

One thing at least may be confidently asserted, that the bishops and priests of the Church in the second century had received their apostolic powers of safeguarding gospel truth and feeding souls with means of grace, in direct and continuous transmission through previous bishops, from the apostles themselves. So Bishop Clement of Rome writes, about A.D. 95, "Christ is from God, and the apostles are from Christ . . . they appointed their first fruits . . . to be bishops and deacons . . . and afterwards they provided a continuance, that if these should fall asleep other approved men should succeed to their ministration" (*ad Cor.* 42, 44). And Bishop Ignatius of Antioch, about

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A.D. 110, writes, "without these (i.e. bishop, presbyters, and deacons) there is nothing you can call a church" (*ad Trall.* 3).

(iii) *The Gospel and the Creeds*

From the day of Pentecost onward the Church spread rapidly, particularly in the Roman Empire, which embraced most of the then known and civilized world. The fierce and bloody persecutions which the Roman Government from time to time directed or permitted against professing Christians, or the clergy, only served to attract numbers of the best types of men and women to Christ's service.

But after 313 Christianity became a tolerated and "established" religion, and the Imperial Court was converted to Christianity. Among other most important consequences of the change was this, that side by side with really converted Christians there poured into the Church a host of others who professed the service of Christ for reasons of convention or respectability, and practised it only with a half-hearted devotion. The problems thus created remain to this day. The presence of numbers of half-converted Christians causes the Church great difficulty in maintaining Christ's own standards of religion and morality, but at the same time affords a great opportunity of converting large masses of people who are nominal adherents of Christianity.

At the time the Church was immediately rent with divisions. This was due largely to the amount of Government support given to the teaching of a priest named Arius, who tried to invent an intellectual short-cut to the understanding of the gospel by means of

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ideas which were at bottom more pagan than evangelical. One heresy provoked another, and it took nearly a hundred and fifty years for the Catholic leaders to vindicate the truth of the apostolic gospel teaching about God and Jesus Christ. This was, however, at last finally accomplished, mainly through the conservative dislike of the Roman and other Western churches for unevangelical speculations, and through the magnificent example of wisdom, firmness, and tolerance manifested by the great archbishop of Alexandria, St. Athanasius.

The actual form in which the mind of the Church came to be expressed was that of creeds drawn up by General Councils. Every church had long had a simple creed which summed up the instruction given to candidates for baptism ; these creeds were very similar both to one another and to our *Apostles' Creed*, which eventually grew out of them. (It was so called because it summarised the teaching which had been derived from the apostles.) But just because they were so simple it was possible for them to be explained away ; and during the controversy with Arius and the other heretics it was found necessary to add certain words and phrases in order to exclude various forms of false teaching.

For this purpose councils of bishops met, and suggested a number of different forms of creed. Some of these proved useful, some misleading ; but in the end the creed we call the *Nicene Creed* was accepted by the Council of Chalcedon in 451, together with a long explanatory document called the *Definition of Chalcedon* ; and these were universally accepted and approved by all except deliberate heretics, as indicating

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what the true gospel was, which had been preached since the time of the apostles and could be confirmed by the New Testament.¹

The Councils did more than draw up creeds. They discussed numbers of practical problems, and in particular they examined the teaching of various notorious persons and passed judgement on those who were found to be falsifying the gospel. In the end those Councils whose conclusions proved to be of outstanding importance, and were accepted as true by the whole Church, were known as General Councils. About these it is important to bear certain facts in mind.

(a) There were many Councils, even many perfectly orthodox ones, which are not called General Councils. Only the most important have received that name.

(b) The General Councils were not composed of all the bishops of the Church, nor was there any system of representation to decide who should be members of them. It was largely a matter of accident who happened to be able to attend. They were only called "General" because their conclusions were "generally" (i.e. universally) accepted, after consideration, by local synods held in different parts of the world.

(c) Consequently it is a mistake to suppose that on certain occasions a gathering of all the bishops of the Church was assembled with the idea that they would be infallible and unable to make mistakes. The Holy Ghost is infallible ; but no single bishop on earth, and no committee of bishops on earth, is so : they have to learn from him in the same way as did the prophets of

¹ The *Athanasian Creed* is not a creed and has nothing to do with St. Athanasius. It is really an edifying theological psalm which came into use in Western Europe about the fifth century.

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old. And the General Councils are held in honour, not because they were infallible and could not possibly have erred, but because the whole inspired sense of Christendom was convinced that in these particular cases their members did in fact give a true interpretation of the gospel of Christ. The Church has no warrant for believing it possesses any infallible organ for receiving fresh revelations of new truth, but only that it will be guided to the better understanding and fuller comprehension of what is implicitly contained in the one gospel once committed to its keeping.

(iv) *The Divisions of the Church*

During the same troubled period of which we have been speaking the different dioceses and provinces of the Church came to be organized in five vast groups or *patriarchates*, of which the most important were those of Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople in the East, and Rome in the West. The system was copied from the system of the Imperial government, and the different groups had varying local feelings and associations, which helped to give each patriarchate a sense of unity within itself and to distinguish it from its neighbours.

This led unfortunately to unseemly rivalry and ambition between some of the patriarchs at the head of each group of churches.¹ There was first a great struggle for precedence between Alexandria and Constantinople, from which the latter emerged superior. Meantime from different causes the Roman patriarch or pope had acquired very great influence ; and at two

¹ Even this, though unedifying, can hardly be called altogether unapostolic (see *St. Mark* ix. 33-37 ; x. 34-45).

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periods, in the middle of the fifth century and again a hundred and fifty years later, when the Imperial power was administered from the East and Italy was being assailed by invasions of Huns, Vandals, and Lombards, two great popes, Leo I (440-461) and Gregory I (590-604), enjoyed very great political power. Even earlier than either of these, pope Innocent I (402-417) had claimed a universal jurisdiction over the Church; this claim was renewed with ever-increasing force by his successors, who had, at any rate in Western Europe, power to enforce it.

But the East had a very different mental atmosphere and political outlook from the West, and refused to surrender its independence. It was ready to pay respect to the Roman pope as chief in honour among bishops; but his claims to dictate to and to overrule the Eastern Church were met with continual disregard or open protest.

Soon the sole important patriarchate in the East was that of Constantinople: the other patriarchates were practically swept away by the Mohammedan invaders in the seventh century. On the other hand, though North Africa was also overrun by them, the Roman position was greatly strengthened by the support of the new Empire of the West established by the Frankish king Charlemagne (800-814). In 867 the clash of Rome and Constantinople produced open division; and though the schism was patched up for a time, it reopened in 1054, and with one brief interval communion has been broken off between the Churches of Rome and the East ever since. Minor differences in doctrine and practice contributed to this disaster, but the real cause lay in the Roman claims.

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Centuries later the same cause led to a similar result elsewhere. In protest against Roman abuses thousands of Christians in the West (especially in Germany and Switzerland) broke away entirely from the Church, and founded new organizations with unapostolic ministries and in some respects unapostolic gospels. These bodies are now known as *Protestants*. In England protests had been raised throughout the Middle Ages against Roman domination and misgovernment of the Church ; in the course of the sixteenth century the English Church finally reasserted its independence, and in consequence Rome broke off communion with it. It is true that England was at the time under strong Protestant influence ; yet in the very teeth of that influence every essential element of Catholic faith and practice was deliberately maintained in the English Church. It was a consequence of this that later on some Englishmen left the English Church and founded separate Protestant bodies.

The Catholic Church has thus broken into three great communions—the Eastern Orthodox, the Roman, and the Anglican. In the Roman Church, centralization has proceeded apace, and the papal exercise of universal supremacy in practical affairs has encouraged the logical development of a further claim to infallibility in questions of doctrine and morals ; so that in his own communion the pope is now supreme indeed. In the East the ancient patriarchal system has broken down, and each national Church in the Orthodox communion is self-governing and largely independent. Some progress has been made towards the development of new national patriarchates, with Constantinople as the chief of these, though not their master.

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The Church of England remains Catholic, though many people of Protestant opinions are numbered among her loyal adherents. A great family of national or regional Churches has sprung from her throughout the world, but while all reverence the see of Canterbury as the premier see of the Anglican communion, all the daughter Churches are free and independent. The bond that holds them together is not one of despotism, nor even altogether one of race, but one of common faith and mutual service. And at last in this twentieth century the Eastern and the Anglican Churches, holding as they do so much in common with one another, have begun to break down the ancient barriers which temperamental and political divergence, and the Roman domination, built between Eastern and Western Christianity ; and they are being slowly, but not less surely, drawn together again.

CHAPTER V

THE OLD TESTAMENT

(i) Old Testament Difficulties

WE have already seen that the Bible is a record of religious experience. It falls into two great divisions, the Old Testament and the New Testament ; and the Jews themselves divided the Old Testament into three parts, called respectively the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

The Old Testament is a collection of books of many different kinds and of very varying age, recording in the Jews' own judgement the experience of God which had been acquired in the long course of their history by the most spiritual and inspired men of the Hebrew people. It therefore contains the material for forming an estimate of the development of Jewish religious ideas, and from it we can discover the groundwork of religious truth which Christ found ready prepared for him to build on when he came to make the fuller revelation of the gospel.

The primary importance of the Old Testament lies in its being a book of religion. In what its authors have to say about other things than religion they often give us what are merely their own opinions, or the opinions of people generally in the age at which they wrote ; and these opinions may or may not be scientifically valuable, though they are always of interest to a student. But in what they tell us about God and

his dealings with themselves they are writing from a personal experience based on spiritual insight of a high order ; and the principles which their experience discloses, though sometimes incomplete and requiring to be supplemented in the light of the full gospel of Christ, are of permanent value and importance to the whole of mankind.

These facts explain what are often felt to be grave difficulties about certain parts of the Old Testament. Sometimes the writer of one book contradicts something stated in another book, or even in a different part of the same book : that is simply due to the fact that the Old Testament often contains two or more independent versions or traditions of the same event. Or we find, for instance, that *Genesis* in its account of the creation describes the world in an unscientific manner (in fact, in very much the same way as the traditions of the Babylonians describe it) as an inverted bowl of air and dry land in a universe of water. But the object of *Genesis* is not to save natural scientists the trouble of using their brains, but to teach us the majesty of God and the dignity of man ; which the corresponding Babylonian stories do not teach.

Again, the Old Testament was written by members of a nation which (as the gospels quite plainly tell us) had a craving for miraculous signs. Christ himself later on had to rebuke the Jews for this (*St. Luke* xi. 29, etc.). No doubt in certain cases the writers were credulous and mixed legends with history in their narrative of past events ; though no supernatural claims are made for themselves by the great writing prophets. However, many supposedly miraculous narratives in the Old Testament are really nothing of the

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sort, and were not intended to be so taken by their authors. Such stories as those of the talking serpent (*Gen.* iii.) and of Balaam's ass (*Num.* xxii.), or *Jonah* and *Daniel*, belong to a class of literature which we should call parables or historical allegories, and may be compared on their purely literary side with *Æsop's Fables* or *Uncle Remus* or *Gulliver's Travels*. Nevertheless they all had an important moral and religious meaning, of which the value remains unimpaired, and always will remain.

Once more, the Old Testament is often attacked for approving the bloodthirsty or immoral conduct of some of its heroes. Certain Bible heroes, and the writers of certain Scriptural books, were indeed in some respects no better than the age they lived in. The same may be said about many great Englishmen, such as Sir Francis Drake or Oliver Cromwell or Lord Nelson, who are nevertheless held in honour on other grounds. God's revelation was gradual and progressive, according to the capacity of the Hebrews to receive it; and the Church (following our Lord himself) has always taught that the Old Testament is incomplete: it is only an introduction to the gospel, and has to be interpreted in the light of the New Testament.

And even apart from this, if the Old Testament is studied as a whole it will usually be found to condemn the very sins which its critics attack it for occasionally upholding. For instance, in various places the prophets utter direct condemnations of butchery, and powerfully uphold ideals of peace and international friendship and human brotherhood. And it is worth remembering that the particular failing of vindictive-

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ness, which admittedly exists in parts of the Old Testament, usually represents a moral claim for righteousness and justice—a claim which takes that form merely because the men who uttered it had as yet no conception of a future life for the righteous settlement of moral problems, but expected any vindication of moral principles to be possible only on the stage of this world's history.

(ii) *The Prophets*

About a thousand years before Christ the Hebrew nation, whose ancestors had settled in Palestine (or Canaan) about 250 years earlier, was first united under a stable central government by King David. On the accession of his grandson, Rehoboam, it was permanently sundered into two states, the prosperous and comparatively powerful kingdom of Israel in the centre and north of the country, and the poor and struggling kingdom of Judah in the south.

The southern state for various reasons kept its religion more pure and more progressive, and was destined to inherit both the traditions and the mission of the whole nation. The northern state in the middle of the eighth century was sunk in materialism and moral decadence, and two great preachers were raised up to warn it against the sins of luxury, selfishness, dishonesty, and oppression which were rife. *Amos* (a Judæan) spoke particularly of the punishment which was bound to follow upon the disregard of morality; *Hosea* also held out the attraction of God's long-suffering love and inexhaustible mercy to the penitent, commending his faith by his own example towards his unfaithful wife. But both were disregarded. In 721

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the kingdom of Israel was destroyed for ever by the Assyrians ; its inhabitants were deported, and were speedily engulfed among the heathen in the new homes to which they were taken.

Isaiah and *Micah* shortly afterwards gave similar warning to the kingdom of Judah. *Isaiah* was a very great statesman as well as a prophet, and constantly advised the kings of Judah to keep clear of entanglements with foreign powers (particularly Assyria and Egypt), which were far too strong and selfish for Judah, whether as allies or as enemies. He foresaw that the country would be ruined when his advice was not followed. But he also foretold that a small remnant, including Jerusalem, the capital, would be wonderfully saved by God, to form the nucleus for a glorious future restoration. And this actually happened, when Jerusalem was preserved, against all human calculation, from Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in 701. So God's mission entrusted to the Hebrew nation was handed down through the purged remnant of the Judæans.

The present book of *Isaiah* is a compilation of several earlier books, completed much later than the prophet's own day. *Isaiah* i.-xii. forms one such book, of which all but the epilogue seems to consist of the prophet's own sermons. The majority of the short prophecies contained in xiii.-xxxv. also appear to be *Isaiah's* own, except xxiv.-xxvii. *Isaiah* xxxvi.-xxxix. consists of an extract from 2 *Kings* xviii.-xx. The remainder of the compilation is quite distinct and of later date. Similarly *Micah* iv.-vii. is a later addition to the original prophecies of *Micah*.

After *Isaiah* the Jews relapsed into idolatry and the sins that in Canaan invariably accompanied idolatry.

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About 630 further prophets arose. *Nabum* denounced the cruelty, and foretold the impending doom, of the empire of the Assyrians. *Zephaniah* preached the imminence of a day of judgement on all the nations. *Habakkuk* prophesied punishment for various sins ; or if the book which goes by his name is of later date, at any rate it is believed by scholars to contain elements which belong to this period.

Greater than any of these was *Jeremiah*. He taught that unless Judah repented it would be destroyed by the Babylonians (who had meantime overcome and supplanted Assyria). He also wisely counselled submission to them when their armies approached to attack Judah ; but he was accused of being unpatriotic and barely escaped with his life. Nevertheless he had faith to foresee that God's purposes must be fulfilled, and that the people would in time return from exile to complete their mission. His was an unhappy task, which he faced with melancholy courage and prayerful conviction. He was also the first to teach the doctrine of individual responsibility—that the children are not punished for the sins of their fathers, but for their own sins. The book of his prophecies was probably first edited, with historical notes, by his secretary Baruch (*Jerem.* xlv. 1), though like most of the prophetic books it has been again re-edited later.

Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonians in 597, and many of its inhabitants were carried into exile. It rebelled ; and in 586 it was again taken, and its destruction completed. *Ezekiel* was one of the first band of exiles. He first of all, while comforting his fellow exiles in Babylon, foretold the sack of Jerusalem which took place in 586 ; after that event he drew a

glowing picture of a future return of the exiles and of their re-establishment in an idealized ecclesiastical kingdom, which supplies much of the religious inspiration of later Judaism. He was a very strong supporter of the doctrine of individual responsibility.

Obadiah is mainly directed against the Edomites, who took advantage of Judah's downfall to plunder her. It probably belongs to this period.

Isaiah xl.-lv. forms one book, dating from about 550. The author's name being quite unknown, he is often referred to as Second-Isaiah. He denounces the folly of the idolatry of Babylon, and foretells the conquest of the Babylonians by Cyrus, king of the Medes (which happened in 539). Cyrus is to be God's instrument for the restoration of Judah. The enormous importance of this prophet is that he pictures the remnant of Israel as being God's suffering servant, by whose sufferings and death the other nations will be drawn to the service of God. This expectation was really only fulfilled by Christ. The remaining chapters, *Isaiah* lvi.-lxvi., form a collection of prophecies which seem to date from after the return from exile.

After the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus some of the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem, and the Jewish Zerubbabel was appointed governor. In 520 and 519 *Haggai* and *Zechariah* encouraged them to rebuild the temple (*Zech.* ix.-xiv. is a much later addition). Later on more exiles returned. Some time subsequently *Malachi* reproved the slackness which had in his day overtaken the service of the temple, and *Joel* based a call to penitence, and the anticipation of a final judgement, upon the occasion of a plague of locusts. *Jonah* is a parable, in keeping with the mis-

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sionary views of Second-Isaiah. The prophet himself represents rebellious Israel and Judah, his swallowing by the sea-monster denotes the exile in Babylon, and Nineveh is the type of the oppressors who must be converted.

Under the guidance of the prophets the early historical records of the nation also were edited. Thus *Joshua* contains an account of the conquest of Canaan by the Hebrew tribes, idealized to give a picture of the holy war of the people of God against the forces of evil. *Judges* is a collection of ancient stories mainly concerned with the different tribal leaders who completed the conquest of the land, and saved their several districts from the various further invaders that followed the footsteps of the victorious Hebrews. The book teaches that God helps Israel when it is obedient and punishes it when it is unfaithful to him. The books of *Samuel* describe the foundation of the monarchy under Saul and David. The books of *Kings* give a history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah down to the destruction of the former and the exile of the latter.

According to ancient practice, these books, though brought to their present form by editors belonging to the period of the exile (or very little earlier), contain transcriptions of many very much older documents, parts of which are incorporated bodily in the text. But the compilers' object in selecting and arranging their subjects was usually quite as much to teach moral lessons as to record past events,¹ so that it requires

¹ It is a well-known fact that many modern historians also have quite unconsciously twisted the actual facts of history in the interests of their own political theories, e.g. Macaulay.

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expert study to decide exactly what parts are literal history and what are a prophetic meditation upon history.

(iii) *The Law*

The Law consists of the Pentateuch ("Five Volumes") or first five books of the Bible. It contains in addition to law a great deal of historical narrative, dealing with the events that led up to the final occupation of Canaan by the Hebrews. The reason for this is that it was the one man, Moses, who under God both laid the foundations of their national existence, and also gave them the elements of a law from which all their later legislation was developed and expanded.

The root principle which distinguishes the law of the Hebrews is that God had of his own love freely chosen them to be his peculiar people, and expected of them appropriate service in return. There was thus an element of contract in the relation between God and Israel: he was not bound to support them unless they performed their part of the covenant. And since he was a God of righteousness and morality (unlike most of the gods of the heathen around them), the keeping of his covenant implied righteousness and morality in his worshippers.

The following stages can be traced in the development of the Jewish law into the form which it had come to have after the exile, when the Pentateuch was compiled.

(a) The ten commandments (*Exod.* xx. 1-17). These may in some form actually go back to Moses himself.

(b) The laws of *Exodus* xx. 23-xxiii. 33 and xxxiv. 10-26. These enactments clearly represent the cus-

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toms of an agricultural and not of a nomadic community : they belong to the time of the early kings of Israel and Judah.

(c) The laws of *Deuteronomy*. These represent the ideals of the reforming prophets in Judah, in the second half of the seventh century. The law-book found in the Temple in 621, and put into operation by King Josiah (2 *Kings* xxii.), was either our *Deuteronomy* or at least a substantial part of it. These laws show an advance in civilization—men now often lived in cities—and in humanity; they forbid various methods of worship which were associated with Canaanitish idolatry and immorality, and concentrate the offering of sacrifice at Jerusalem. Previously it had been offered at many local shrines and altars, to the detriment of good morals, since these shrines were often centres of corruption. The moral and religious tone of the book is extremely high. It will be noticed that most of the book is put into the mouth of the first great law-giver, Moses; in other words, it is thrown into dramatic, not into narrative, form.

(d) The laws of *Leviticus* xvii.—xxvi. These inculcate a high ideal of holiness and seek to guard against defilement. They shew strong resemblances to the language and ideals of Ezekiel.

(e) During and after the exile further developments took place, and the rules of temple worship and of religion generally were much elaborated under the influence of the exiled priests of Jerusalem. These laws were brought into operation by Nehemiah and Ezra in 444. Examples of the regulations of this period may be found in *Exodus* xxv.—xxxv. ; xxxv.—xl. ; *Leviticus* i.—xvi. ; and in large portions of the book of *Numbers*.

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Side by side with the different stages in the laws may be traced different stages in the presentation of the early Hebrew history with which the original laws were associated.

(a) An ancient collection of early myths and traditions was apparently made in the kingdom of Judah about 850. A similar collection was made, perhaps a century later, in the northern kingdom, covering part at least of the same ground; this was afterwards combined with the former collection, and the two together contribute most of *Genesis* and a great part of *Exodus*.

(b) A later version of part of this history is found in *Deuteronomy*, which we have already described.

(c) The priests who revised the laws during the exile also re-wrote portions of the history, and edited the ancient traditions contained in *Genesis*, *Exodus*, and parts of *Numbers*. Their work really reflects the ideas and observances of the time in which they wrote, which they describe as if they had been current in the times of Abraham and Moses.

(d) Finally, the Pentateuch was completed by being brought together into a single book by editors of the priestly school, about the fourth century B.C.

(iv) *The Writings*

The Writings constitute the latest section of the Old Testament to be accepted as Scripture. Some of them, which were accepted by the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria, and from them by the early Christian Church, were for various reasons never regarded as Scriptural by the Jews of Palestine: these books form what in modern times we call the Apocrypha of the

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Old Testament, and are here distinguished by having their titles enclosed in brackets.

It will be convenient to consider the Writings in groups.

(a) Far the most important of the Writings is the book of *Psalms*. This was the "hymn book" of the Jews, of Christ, and of the early Christians; and out of the custom of reciting portions of it daily, together with regular lections from other parts of Scripture, has developed the daily choir office of the Church, known in England in the form of Morning and Evening Prayer.

The present collection of psalms was compiled out of several earlier collections: it contains poems of every date from the ancient Hebrew kings to the second century B.C. Some are national, some are individual; some historical; some visionary; some penitential, others triumphant; they voice almost every need and mood of the religious soul; and provided they are used intelligently (with their literal sense sometimes reinterpreted in the spirit of the Christian gospel) their spiritual value, whether for public or private devotion, can never be surpassed.

With them may be mentioned *Lamentations*, a series of five elegies upon the fall of Jerusalem, made at different dates during the exile (one may be later); and the *Song of Songs*, a collection of Hebrew love-songs made probably long after the return from exile, which seems to have been included in the Bible because it could be made to serve mystically as illustrating the love of God for his people.

(b) There are a number of historical and narrative books. *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah* are really one continuous history of the chosen people, composed

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about the third century B.C. Like the later parts of the Pentateuch, they reflect very much the ideals of the post-exilic Jews, as may be seen by comparing them in detail with the books of *Samuel* and *Kings*. *Nehemiah* contains large extracts from the memoirs of Nehemiah, a Jew who was appointed governor of Judæa by the Persian king in 445, and first put the restored community on a sound footing by contriving to rebuild the walls of the city and enforcing the priestly laws.

Closely related to the foregoing is [*1 Esdras*], a later paraphrase covering Jewish history from Josiah to Nehemiah.

[*1 Maccabees*] is a valuable history of the great "Killing-time" when the Jews were persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes, and of their subsequent struggles for freedom under the great Maccabean family (175-135 B.C.). It was made shortly after the events which it records. [*2 Maccabees*] was composed a little later, and is an abridgement of a larger work no longer existing, which deals with the events of 175-161 B.C.

Ruth is a post-exilic narrative embodying the popular traditions about David's ancestry, and is remarkable for its tolerance towards foreigners.

Esther is a popular religious romance dating from perhaps the third century B.C., which may be based on historical traditions; it should be valued chiefly for its sense of the divine providence watching over God's people.

[*Judith*] is another popular romance, and quite unhistorical, though it also may conceivably be based on some popular tradition. It was probably composed to hearten the Jews to resist the persecution in the time of the Maccabees.

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[*Tobit*] is a charming moral tale, written probably in Egypt, towards the close of the third century B.C. Of it Luther justly wrote, "Is it fiction? Then it is a truly beautiful, wholesome, and profitable fiction."

(c) Another group contains what are called the "Wisdom" books, composed under the influence of the proverb-writers and "wise" men, who thought much about the meaning of true wisdom and its application to daily life.

Job was written after the exile, and voices in sublime poetry the protest of those who, believing in individual responsibility, yet found that just men often undergo great sufferings in this life. The author took as his example the traditional figure of the patriarch Job. He had as yet no clear idea of a future life in which the injustices of this world may be righted; and his conclusion is that the problem of suffering is too great for man's understanding—he must simply go on doing his duty and trust in God.

Proverbs dates from about 300, and is largely composed of earlier collections of proverbs and wise sayings. In *Proverbs* viii. the author almost personifies Wisdom, and attributes to it the providential order of the world.

[*Ecclesiasticus*] was written about 185, and is a noble monument of Jewish piety, sober, moral, and devout, rising to considerable heights of eloquence. Chapters xliv.-l. form a splendid pæan of praise over the great figures in Hebrew and Jewish history. The author identifies Wisdom with the Jewish law; and a strong affinity of spirit exists between his book and the epistle of St. James.

[*Wisdom*] was written probably about a century later, and in Alexandria. It therefore represents the

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beliefs of Jews who had been influenced by Greek philosophy, and plainly teaches a future life for the soul, with rewards and punishments. The author of chapters i.-x. is a true religious poet and thinker.

Ecclesiastes dates from about 200. It represents early Sadducean views in Palestine, and contains a very pessimistic and agnostic strain.

(d) After the prophets had ceased, their work was taken up by a school of writers who composed "apocalypses." These works, which are full of symbolism, usually contain an element of romance based upon ancient tradition, or else a series of visions, and the whole is commonly put into the mouth of some hero of the past; under this disguise a review is given of events and problems current in the writer's own day, or of the history leading up to them, and a criticism made upon them from the moral and religious standpoint.

Daniel is one such apocalypse, written shortly after 168, with the double purpose of heartening the Jews against persecution and of reviewing the course of recent history; it ends with a triumphant prediction that God would overthrow Antiochus and deliver the Jews. It thus inculcates unswerving faith against immeasurable odds. It also teaches belief in a future life and the resurrection of the body.

[*Baruch*], though not an apocalypse, is a review, partly in verse, of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. and dates from shortly after that event. It is therefore a very late work. It disguises the events and persons with which it deals under the veil of ancient history (the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians nearly 700 years before).

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[2 *Esdras*] is a late apocalypse composed about 100-120 A.D. Like apocalyptic writers in general, its author is convinced of the hopeless character of the existing age, and looks to a glorified future to solve the problems of the present.

The remaining short pieces contained in the Apocrypha are late additions to, or completions of, certain of the canonical books.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW TESTAMENT

(i) *The Synoptic Gospels*

THE teaching of the Church in the earliest days was naturally of a practical kind, designed to answer the question, "Brethren, what shall we do?" So the apostles preached repentance, Baptism and Confirmation, and Christian morals, and taught their converts to abide in their teaching and fellowship, and to worship God by the Breaking of Bread and the prayers (*Acts* ii. 37-42).

As time went on, however, a natural desire arose in the growing Christian communities for more detailed information about the authority which lay behind these instructions. Further knowledge was sought in two directions: men asked what Christ had done to set in motion the operations of divine grace, and what he had said to consecrate the standards and principles of Christian conduct. And among other books which were composed to meet this need we can trace two—one in answer to the question, What did Christ do? the other setting forth something of what Christ had said.

The first of these books is the *Gospel according to St. Mark*. It is not in any way a complete biography of Christ: biographies were to come later. It only begins with the opening of our Lord's public ministry, and does not tell us much about that except the Gali-

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lean part of it ; and two-fifths of it is concerned solely with the Passion in the last week of our Lord's life. The earlier part contains very little information about Christ's teaching, but a great deal about his doings—how he healed and restored men's bodies and souls, and trained his apostles in the same work. So it is clearly intended to show, in answer to enquirers, how Jesus the great healer came to seek and to save, to minister and give his life as ransom for many, and to found a Church to carry on the works of his mercy.

This book was written by St. Mark, the friend and assistant in turn of St. Paul, St. Barnabas, and St. Peter ; and was probably made for the Christians in Rome, who had heard the gospel stories with which St. Peter illustrated his sermons, and persuaded his "son Mark" to put them down on paper. There is no reason to suppose that it was written later than A.D. 50. At some comparatively early date the end of the sole surviving manuscript seems to have been torn off ; and the last twelve verses were added, to complete the story, early in the second century.

The second book no longer has any separate existence ; but we know of it from a statement of an early Christian writer who says, "Matthew composed the *oracles* in the Hebrew language." This certainly does not refer to our first gospel, which was pretty clearly written in Greek, not Hebrew. Nevertheless we are able to find traces of a Greek work, which may well have been written in Hebrew originally, and is well suited to bear the title *Oracles*, since it chiefly contains the record of some of our Lord's sayings uttered on certain specified occasions : and it is not unreasonable

to suppose that this may have been a translation from the *Oracles* which the apostle Matthew wrote.

The traces of this lost book are located by scholars in considerable portions of our first and third gospels. Ancient writers, when they derived their information from some previous work, did not always paraphrase and restate it in their own words, as a modern historian does ; but frequently copied out almost word for word the contents of their source, or as much of it as they wanted, into their own books. This course seems to have been adopted by the authors both of the first and of the third of our gospels, with a book which certainly dealt in the main with our Lord's teaching, and was very probably current at any rate in Hebrew before A.D. 50—so that it may well have been St. Matthew's actual book of *Oracles*. They also used *St. Mark* in the same way : and that is why the first three gospels contain so much of the same subject-matter in common (whence the name *Synoptic*, or " seeing in common ").

The *Gospel according to St. Luke* was written by the " beloved physician " whose name it bears, the Gentile friend and attendant of St. Paul. He had several sources of knowledge—*St. Mark*, the book of sayings or *Oracles*, and a narrative (contained in his first two chapters) of Christ's birth and infancy. He was also for two years at Cæsarea in Palestine with St. Paul (*Acts* xxiv. 27), about 56–58, and quite clearly obtained a good deal of fresh information during his stay in the Holy Land. He combined all these sources so as to tell the story of Christ's life as nearly as he could in the order of the events ; and then apparently collected in chapters x.–xvii. the rest of his material to which he was unable to assign a precise place in the story. The

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work was presumably completed during St. Paul's two years' imprisonment at Rome (*Acts* xxviii. 16, 30) in the years 59-61, though some scholars for no very obvious reason date it somewhat later.

St. Luke was a great historian, great alike in insight, sympathy, accuracy, and grasp of affairs; a worthy author of the first biography of Christ.

The *Gospel according to St. Matthew* was composed by another great literary artist, though one of quite different gifts from St. Luke. Modern scholars are practically unanimous in asserting that it cannot have been written by the apostle Matthew, but is the work of some other Jewish Christian, dating from about the same time as *St. Luke*. It bears St. Matthew's name not because he wrote it, but because much of its contents was derived (as we may assume) from his book of *Oracles*, and because it embodies the traditions of the Church in Palestine, which were associated with him.

The author is greatly concerned to show that Christ was the promised Messiah to whose coming a right interpretation of the Old Testament pointed. But the most striking feature of the book is the way in which the material is arranged, so as to illustrate different aspects in turn of Christ's life and teaching and work. Thus *St. Matthew* v.-vii. is a carefully analysed collection of teaching on the Christian law and spiritual life; viii.-ix. forms a similar collection of miracles, arranged in groups; x. consists of teaching that bears on missionary effort; xi. and xii. illustrate doubt and opposition; xiii. contains parables about the kingdom of heaven; xviii. bears on the priestly life; xxiii.-xxv. deals with judgement on the Jews and the last things.

We therefore find in this gospel that some passages

are repeated under more than one of the above heads, and events are not always recorded in the order in which the other gospels relate that they happened : but it supplies a most practical compendium of studies in the life and character of Christ, which was extremely valuable in the days before such aids as an index or cross-references had come into use, and does not in the least lose that value to-day.

(ii) *The Fourth Gospel*

The authorship of the *Gospel according to St. John* is disputed by critics. It is, however, hardly conceivable that it was not composed by a Jew of Palestine who was both a disciple and an eye-witness of at any rate most of the events which he records ; and since the evidence of early writers very strongly supports the authorship of the apostle John, there is good reason for accepting it, reason which study of the book itself in many ways confirms.

St. John is said to have written the gospel in extreme old age, probably not before A.D. 90. His purpose in writing is manifest : the book is not a full biography, but a selection of incidents, strictly limited in number, designed to illustrate the divine revelation of himself by Christ to his disciples, and through them to the world. Incidentally it does give us in several respects a more complete knowledge of the life of Christ than we could acquire from the Synoptic gospels alone, particularly of the occasions when he left the peasants of Galilee (with whom he was superficially popular) and testified to the educated Jews of Jerusalem (who for the most part hated him). It also contains a number of St. John's own comments on the course of Christ's

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history, intended to throw light upon the inner significance of sayings or events.

To some extent the book may justly be considered as a meditation upon the life of Christ ; and it seems possible that the apostle may sometimes give the substance of Christ's discourses in his own words rather than in the words in which Christ originally uttered them—in the form of a *précis* rather than a *verbatim* report. On the other hand, a great deal of the discourses recorded in this gospel appears to consist of extracts, which are probably as near as anything else we possess to the actual and literal words that fell from the lips of Christ.

At any rate, the author possessed the deepest insight into the spiritual realities underlying the contest between Christ and the unbelieving Jews (a subject upon which the other evangelists have not nearly so much to say) ; and looking back at the end of his course on the life upon which he had spent his own life-time in meditation, he drew an unsurpassable picture of him who was the Word of God and the life and light of men. The portrait which he gives of Christ is at once more human and more divine than any other we possess.

(iii) *The Epistles of St. Paul*

We have thirteen letters written by St. Paul to different communities or individuals. They were not composed with the idea of forming a handbook of apostolic doctrine or practice, but to meet particular problems which had arisen or to answer difficulties about which St. Paul's correspondents had questioned him. Consequently they contain no information what-

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ever about the earthly life of Christ, and a good deal of space is occupied in them by matters that are to us relatively unimportant. Nevertheless they tell us incidentally a great deal that is of the highest importance, and clearly imply that St. Paul's faith was that of an ordinary practising Catholic Christian.

Galatians deals largely with the problem settled at the Council of Jerusalem (*Acts* xv.) about 49 A.D. The Galatians to whom it is addressed are the Christians of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and that region of Asia Minor whom St. Paul had converted during the years 47-48 (*Acts* xiii.-xiv.). Probably on his very way up to the Council he heard how the newly established churches had been perverted to the view that men must be or become Jews before they can be Christians ; and hot with pain and anxiety and tenderness, he dashed off this burning letter to recall them to a saner mind. It is useless in practice, says St. Paul, to rely for salvation (like the Jews) upon the merits of our own righteous acts : we can never maintain a standard of perfection. We must, therefore, trust God and his promises, which are held out irrespective of any merit of ours, and try to live our lives by the help of his grace freely bestowed.

1 and 2 *Thessalonians* were written during his stay at Corinth (*Acts* xviii.) about the year 51. He had had to leave his converts at Thessalonica (the ancient name of Salonika) very hurriedly (*Acts* xvii. 1-10) and wrote to encourage them under persecution. He also comforted them with the assurance that those who died before Christ's second coming would not be left at any disadvantage in his kingdom. The second letter warned them against supposing that the second coming

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would be immediate, and on that account neglecting their ordinary duties : they were to go on soberly with their daily work.

1 *Corinthians* was written from Ephesus (*Acts* xix.) about 55. St. Paul had heard that there were serious divisions among the Corinthians, and that they were tolerating a scandalous sinner. For this he rebukes them, answers certain practical questions, lays down important doctrines about the Mass and the resurrection of the body, and exhorts them to practise above all the virtue of Christian love.

2 *Corinthians* probably contains portions of two letters : x.-xiii. is withering and ironical, and seems to form part of the answer which the apostle wrote when the Corinthians rejected his directions contained in 1 *Corinthians* ; i.-ix. is his final letter of rejoicing and thanksgiving when the misunderstandings had been cleared up and the Corinthians had submitted to his apostolic authority.

Shortly after these events St. Paul visited Greece again (*Acts* xx. 2), and while there wrote *Romans*, probably from Corinth, about the beginning of 56. He was intending shortly to pay a visit to Rome, and took this opportunity of stating his views on certain questions to the Roman Christians, who stood somewhat detached from the controversies he had had with Jewish Christians in the East. The first part of the letter deals with the subject of faith and all that it implies. By "faith" he means practical trust in God, which, he maintains, is the foundation of religion. Then he turns to the problem of the rejection of Christ by the bulk of the chosen Jewish nation ; and he ends with some practical exhortations.

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The apostle reached Rome, as a prisoner, about 59, and was detained two years. During this period he wrote four more letters. *Philemon* is a private letter to the owner of a runaway slave whom St. Paul had converted in Rome, asking him to take back the fugitive as a Christian brother. *Colossians* is directed against an outbreak of false teaching at Colossæ in Asia Minor. In answer to the claims of the heretics that they provided a superior revelation, and practised a higher ascetic morality, he insists that Christ is the supreme and final revelation of God, and that his cross is the only source of life and salvation. The word "mystery" which he uses so freely in this and the succeeding epistle is roughly equivalent to our word "revelation": it means something disclosed to men by God which would not have occurred to them without his special intervention.

Ephesians may have been a circular letter dispatched to a number of churches: at any rate it was not meant for the Ephesians alone. In it St. Paul announces in splendid language, interspersed with a long prayer for his readers, his conception of the Church as the body of Christ, in which both Jew and Gentile are exalted to the heavenly sphere where Christ reigns, by union with him in the possession of the Holy Spirit. The epistle closes with some practical applications of this high doctrine. *Philippians* is a letter of thankfulness and rejoicing over the apostle's beloved converts at Philippi (see *Acts* xvi.). He bids them to be humble and considerate like Christ, and not reckon the things of this world at too high a value, for the true life is one of exaltation with Christ.

After this St. Paul seems to have been released, and

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to have revisited the scenes of his former labours. 1 *Timothy* and *Titus* are written to the delegates whom he had left at Ephesus and in Crete respectively, to superintend the pastoral organization of the churches. 2 *Timothy* was written after he had been re-arrested, probably in 64 or 65, and was shortly expecting martyrdom. Some scholars regard these three letters as later compositions based on fragments of genuine Pauline epistles. But their arguments are not very conclusive, being based on certain differences in style and language which might easily arise when, as in this case, the apostle was writing to individual friends and assistants, and upon subjects so different from the subjects of his other letters. The letters contain nothing inconsistent either with Pauline authorship or with the contents of the *Acts* and the other Pauline epistles; and we may therefore accept the tradition of the early Church in favour of their genuineness.

(iv) *The rest of the New Testament*

The *Acts of the Apostles* is the second volume of St. Luke's gospel, carrying on the story of Christ's work from the Ascension to St. Paul's arrival in Rome. The first part deals with the extension of the Church from Jerusalem over Palestine and Syria; and obviously St. Luke obtained most, if not all, of his information while he was at Cæsarea, where lived Philip the Deacon and Cornelius (*Acts* xxi. 8; x. 1). The second part relates the missionary labours and personal history of St. Paul, and includes passages of considerable extent in which the author writes in the first person, as an actual eyewitness of the events he describes. It was probably finished in 61, before St. Paul's release.

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Hebrews is addressed to a community of Jewish Christians. Its authorship was early forgotten, and no one can say who wrote it. Its date is probably a little before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, or at the latest within a few years after. Its main argument is that Christianity is the fulfilment of the Law: the whole course and system of Judaism were in the divine providence intended to point and lead up to the religion of Christ. So Christ is the true and heavenly High Priest, and in heaven perpetually offers before God the sacrifice of the cross.

James is another letter to Jewish Christians, almost certainly written by James "the Lord's brother," the first bishop of Jerusalem. It may very well have been circulated in 49, and through misinterpretation by St. Paul's opponents (*Acts* xv. 24; *Galat.* ii. 12) have provoked the controversy settled at the Council of Jerusalem. It is really not in the least inconsistent with St. Paul's teaching, since by "faith" St. James obviously means mere orthodoxy of intellectual assent (see ii. 19). The epistle is very practical, and insists upon the duty of Christian brotherliness. St. James was martyred about 62.

Jude is a short letter, written by St. James's brother, probably to a Gentile church, and directed against the two temptations of quarrelling and immorality about which St. Paul so constantly warned his Gentile converts.

1 *Peter* is a simple, practical, and most beautiful exposition of the hope of the gospel, addressed by St. Peter from Rome ("Babylon") to the churches of Asia Minor, which were threatened with persecution, probably not long before St. Peter's own martyrdom

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in 64. It tells how Jesus Christ is the great example for the persecuted Christian pilgrim, who has been redeemed with the precious blood of the Lamb and shares the glorious priesthood of his Master.

2 *Peter* is almost certainly a homily dating from the second century, put by its author, in the manner of the Jewish apocalyptic writers, into the mouth of St. Peter. Great scholars like Origen in the third century, and Eusebius and Jerome in the fourth, express doubts that were then current about its authorship; and no writer of the first two centuries refers to it at all. It consists of edifying exhortations to godliness of life.

1, 2, and 3 *John* are by the same author as the *Fourth Gospel*. The third epistle is addressed to an individual; the second probably, and the first certainly, to a church. The apostle writes in opposition to certain false teachers who denied the truth of the Incarnation, and refers to an ambitious schismatic called Diotrephes. The letters are marked by very strong insistence upon Christian morality, which is based upon the two eternal truths that God is good and righteous, and that Christ who was true God became also true man to overcome sin in us.

Revelation is a Christian apocalypse, written (probably about 80-90) by a man named John. In the second century he was identified emphatically with the apostle John, but "higher critics" in the third century doubted whether *Revelation* and *St. John* could be by the same author, on grounds of literary style. The probability is that the apostle was the author, though the matter can hardly be considered certain.

At the beginning of the book are letters addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor, to encourage the

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faithful and warn sinners. The rest of the book, in a series of visions, describes symbolically the unseen realities of the spiritual world, and the warfare between Christ and his Church on the one side, and the world (especially the heathen and persecuting Roman Empire), backed by Satan, on the other. The dragon is Satan ; the beast from the sea is the Roman Empire ; the beast from the earth means the Roman government officials in Asia Minor ; Babylon is Rome. The book ends with glorious visions of the victory of the Christian cause, and of the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, built on the foundation of the apostles, the Bride of the Lamb.

CHAPTER VII

THE SACRAMENTS

(i) *Sacraments in General*

THE world as we know it is compounded of two elements, matter and life, of which the former provides the vehicle and sustenance of the latter ; so that even our most spiritual activities of thought and prayer depend in this life upon the unimpaired possession of material nerves and brain. And indeed we have been taught to regard the whole universe as reflecting in its measure the glory of the unseen immaterial Spirit who creates and sustains it. Consequently it need occasion no surprise when we learn that the invisible God assumed human nature in order to illuminate and redeem us ; and need cause no intellectual difficulty when we are further taught that he still employs simple human and material means for our outward reception, whereby to convey to us his inward spiritual graces or gifts, so that life may pass from him to us.

A sacrament then, strictly speaking, comprises two parts, and an effect. The two parts are the sign and the gift or "reality" which it conveys. These are unvarying in each case ; for instance, in the Eucharist the sign is the bread and wine, and the reality is the sacrificed and glorified human life of Jesus. The effect, on the other hand, depends upon the sincerity and devotion of the recipient, and the use he makes of the

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grace bestowed ; so that a person may even “ eat and drink condemnation to himself if he discern not the Lord’s Body ” (1 *Cor.* xi. 29).

This analysis should make perfectly clear the difference between Christian sacraments and heathen magic. Magic claims to produce by a given sign an unalterable effect, irrespective of moral and ethical considerations. The Catholic sacrament does nothing of the sort : it conveys a sign, and bestows a gift ; but the effect upon the personal life of the recipient may be anything from the glorious increase of life, both spiritual and physical, down to the registration of judgement and destruction. Magic, unlike a sacrament, offers no “ reality ” ; it only claims, unlike a sacrament, to secure a fixed and unalterable effect. Sacraments therefore may be instruments of high moral value, while magic tends only to immorality and superstition.

The sacraments differ in dignity and necessity. In Baptism and the Eucharist (sometimes called the “ sacraments of the gospel ”) the sign is known to have been directly instituted by Christ in person, and the same may possibly be said to be true by implication of Matrimony and Unction. In the other sacraments (unless Christ gave the apostles unrecorded directions during the forty days between his resurrection and his ascension) appropriate signs which had been employed by Christ during his ministry were attached to the rites by the Spirit-bearing Church as need arose.

Before leaving the subject we may note another illustration of the general principle, exemplified in the sacraments, that vital realities often require an outward and formal expression. In any human action we

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can logically distinguish first the action performed, and secondly the manner of executing it. So in the administration of sacraments (and indeed in the conduct of worship in general) we distinguish the *rite*, or words and sacramental signs employed, and the *ceremonies* which accompany the reverent performance of the rite.

The ceremonial of the Church rests partly upon traditional usage and partly upon common sense. Naturally it is a matter of very secondary importance. Nevertheless it is very valuable to maintain the principal ceremonial usages of long-standing custom in the Church ; partly because when a thing is to be done at all it is well to do it with the reverence, dignity, and impressiveness which Christian experience has evolved and proved to be helpful ; partly because the ceremonies often help to explain and interpret the meaning and significance of the rite ; and partly because the maintenance of old customs and hallowed associations serves to remind us of our unity with the generations of the faithful who have gone before us, yet in their time served God according to the same principles as the Church follows to-day.

(ii) *Baptism*

Holy Baptism is the sacrament which makes us Christians, that is, unites us to Christ by making us members of his mystical Body. The essential part of the rite consists in either dipping the candidate three times in water, or pouring water three times upon his head, and at the same time saying, *I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.* It is important that every Christian

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should understand precisely how to baptize, since in the absence of the clergy it is a Christian's bounden duty to baptize either an unbaptized infant who may be in danger of death, or any other person in similar case who sincerely desires it.

The use of water in the sacrament was designed by Christ to signify washing (just as in the baptism of John and other previous Jewish rites), and hence "turning over a new leaf" and the beginning of a new life. God's gift in the sacrament is therefore a new birth. As entry upon the natural earthly life involves physical birth, so entry upon the supernatural spiritual life is through Baptism, by which we are born into the life the Holy Spirit gives, which is the life of the Body of Christ. Thereby we obtain the status of sons of God, because Christ is God's Son: we are made acceptable to God in Christ Jesus, and cleansed from all stain of previous sin. In the words of the catechism we become members of Christ and children of God.

If this sacrament is to have its full effect—if we are to become good sons and not bad sons, living members and not corrupt members—certain moral conditions are pre-requisite. The Church therefore demands three pledges of the candidate for Baptism: (*a*) that he is penitent, renouncing sin and all calls to other loyalties which conflict with that of Christ, such as are summarized under the heads of the world, the flesh, and the devil; (*b*) that he has trust in God and the Christian dispensation of grace; (*c*) that he will serve and obey God in his life.

From the earliest times the privilege of Baptism has been extended to infants under certain conditions.

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These are, in brief, that there is reasonable probability of the child being trained up under such Christian influences as will tend to produce in him, so soon as he is capable of understanding, the desire to undertake the three pledges enumerated above. Mother Church no more withholds the new life of grace in Christ from an infant, when these conditions are fulfilled, than earthly parents withhold from their children the physical nourishment and education they need but cannot yet acquire by their own effort. The way in which these conditions are secured is by the provision of godparents, who are both witnesses of the child's baptism, and also put in trust to influence the child, by prayer and every other means open to them, in the direction of true Christian observance and practice.

It has been noted that the new life into which we are born by Baptism is not a purely individual thing, but the life of Christ in his mystical body the Church. We become children of God because we become members of God's Son, and we are united to Christ by entering upon the corporate life of his Body. By Baptism therefore we incur all the obligations of membership in the Catholic Church; and if we fail to fulfil those obligations we thereby lose so much of the fruits of our baptism. The final fruit of our membership is that we should possess the kingdom of heaven: as Christ lived and strove and entered upon his inheritance, so we should live and strive in the power of his grace bestowed upon us in the Catholic Church, that as we enter more and more fully into his life we may also win a share in the inheritance of his kingdom.

(iii) *Confirmation*

The sacrament of Holy Confirmation was normally conferred in the earliest times by the laying on of the apostles' hands, after prayer appropriate to the occasion (*Acts* viii. 14-17 ; xix. 1-6). In course of time the candidates were also anointed with oil, called *Chrism*, to signify the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The administration of the sacrament was originally confined to apostles and bishops. In the Eastern Church, in order that Confirmation might not be unduly delayed in the absence of a bishop, the practice became established that a bishop should consecrate the oil for the sacrament, and permit the actual administration to be made by a priest, with the use of the episcopally consecrated Chrism. In the West, however, whether Chrism were employed or not, the bishop has always continued to administer the sacrament in person.

The gift bestowed is the Holy Spirit, not given merely as an exterior influence or force, but as a Person to be possessed and enjoyed, a true Friend in the heart. He had been promised to believers by Christ (*St. John* xiv. 16, 17 ; xvi. 7-15), and was actually received by the earliest disciples on the day of Pentecost ; after which, like other spiritual gifts, this one also was ordinarily bestowed through the ministry of the Church. Confirmation is the completion of Baptism. As Baptism has washed us, so Confirmation may be said to anoint and clothe us. Seeing that by Baptism we have been taken out of the world and have been by the Holy Spirit grafted and born into the Body and life of Christ, now by Confirmation we receive the Spirit

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of growth and strength himself, Lord and Life-giver, who is to dominate and fill the life of each co-operating member of the body as he filled the human life of the Head.

Since Confirmation is the completion of Baptism, the two sacraments were in apostolic times conferred with the least possible interval. The Eastern Church has always made provision for the prompt administration of Confirmation, and to this day in the East even infants are confirmed immediately after Baptism. In the West for many centuries the Church has thought fit to postpone reception until years of discretion have been reached: Baptism it dares not postpone, but Confirmation may be deferred with more justice. In these circumstances the right age for the Confirmation of normal children is from ten to twelve, when they are perfectly capable of understanding the essential meaning of Christian rites and practices, and still have time in front of them to form habits of devotion before they lose the protection of childhood and are cast on to the world and its temptations.

This gift, like that bestowed in Baptism, is final ; it cannot be repeated. What remains is to stir up and employ the graces already given. These are commonly enumerated under seven heads : *wisdom*, to form right aims and grasp true principles ; *understanding*, to make right judgements about God and human life ; *counsel*, for guidance in difficulties ; *ghostly* (i.e. *spiritual*) *strength*, for perseverance ; *knowledge*, especially of the gospel and of Christian morality ; *godliness*, to act in accordance with that knowledge ; and *holy fear*, which means the spirit of loving dependence upon God, of reverence, awe, obedience, and worship.

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These effects are not commonly produced in a day or in a year. The fruit of the Spirit is to be judged rather by the results of a lifetime of devotion.

(iv) *Eucharist*

At the Last Supper, on the night before his crucifixion, Jesus first gave his Body and Blood for the food of men. As he had nourished his sacred Body for thirty odd years with human food, so now when he came to give his Body to nourish human souls he took ordinary food and made it his Body, and commanded his Church to perpetuate the rite as a memorial of him.

No one can describe the manner of the process by which bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. To all outward appearance the normal characteristics of bread and wine remain in the consecrated elements: Jesus has made them his own without altering or destroying their form. Nevertheless, relying upon his own words solemnly spoken on that sacred night, the Church always has firmly believed that a real change is produced by the consecration, and that the effect of the change is to make Jesus our God himself present in his human nature. "This is my Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. . . . This cup is the new covenant in my Blood, even that which is poured out for you" (*St. Luke* xxii. 19, 20). In his divine nature he is everywhere present; but as man he is only to be apprehended in heaven, and upon the altar or in the tabernacle: for wherever the holy bread and consecrated cup rest, there Jesus dwells, and without leaving his Father's home opens an avenue to heaven through the veil, that is to say his flesh (*Hebr.* x. 19, 20).

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The Eucharist is consecrated through a priest, who has received the Holy Spirit in order to speak in the name of Christ for that purpose. The consecration is thus part of a sacrificial act, which we call the celebration of Mass. In the Mass, Christ admits his Church to a share in the sacrifice which he made once on Calvary and offers perpetually in heaven.

For the sacrifice of Christ's cross included the oblation of his Church : in offering himself he offered also in his own person all those who should believe on him and be united to his sufferings : we are only admitted to share his life on the understanding that we share his sacrifice, that as he died and rose again for us, we too should die to sin and rise to a new life of righteousness. "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? . . . our old man [i.e. self] was crucified with him . . . reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (*Rom. vi. 3-11*).

The Mass then is the presentation before God of the united sacrifice of Christ and of his body the Church. Jesus is present in the Eucharist for us to offer him to God, and ourselves by him and with him and in him. Though we have no gift of our own worthy to be offered, Christ gives us himself as our acceptable oblation, and as we join ourselves, our souls and bodies, to his offering and claim our share therein, we too are accepted by God in the Beloved.

But this does not exhaust the purpose of the Eucharist. The direction to sacrifice was accompanied by the command to eat : and the act of sacrifice is to be completed by feeding upon the divine victim. First we offer Christ ; then we present ourselves ; then we

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receive him with our lips and into our hearts, to consummate the union we have claimed between ourselves and him ; that by constant renewal of our life with his, his strength may spiritually penetrate the fibres of our being, and not only maintain us in the closest union with our Redeemer, but also make us grow more and more into the measure of his stature and the likeness of his grace and glory.

This " bloodless " sacrifice of the Mass (so called by the Fathers because in it, unlike the Jewish sacrifices, nothing is put to death) must necessarily always be the highest and only obligatory form of Christian worship. It was instituted by Christ and he is present at it in his human nature : it commemorates his death and resurrection, in such a way that in it we have our access through him to the Father : he himself, the living bread from heaven (*St. John* vi. 51), is there given us for our food : his presence there is an extension of heaven to earth, and our offering of him is linked together by his presence with the ceaseless heavenly praises of the whole host of the redeemed (see *Rev.* v. 6-14).

Moreover, the Mass is the great service of thanksgiving. The very name Eucharist means " thanksgiving," because as we commemorate the mysteries of our redemption we cannot fail but give thanks : rightly does the English Prayer Book call the Mass " our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving."

And it is also the great service of intercession. No Mass is offered by priest and congregation for or by themselves alone ; they are simply the local representatives in every case of the whole Body of Christ. Their Mass is offered on behalf of the whole body for

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which Christ died, that the treasury of all the blessings which he purposes for men may be unlocked : and he himself “ makes intercession for them ” in heaven, “ being able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him ” (*Hebr.* vii. 25). So our private or special intercessions fall into their place in the great scheme of Christ’s will for mankind, whether living or departed.

Two practical consequences follow. First, if we are in a state of grace, united to Christ by the regular practice of Communion, we can enter very fully into the meaning and purpose of the Mass without necessarily communicating on every occasion upon which we are present. We are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s (*1 Cor.* iii. 23) ; we express this by the worship of the Mass, every attendance carrying us backward to our last Communion and forward to our next. And the unconfirmed children also must be brought to Mass : they too are Christ’s, and though the time may not be ripe for them to receive the highest privilege of all, that is no reason for excluding them from the corporate worship of the Church.

Secondly, as we sometimes attend Mass without communicating, so it is sometimes desirable that we should receive Communion without attending Mass, though this happens far less frequently. The case of the sick and the dying supplies an obvious illustration of the need for giving Communion outside Mass ; but there are many in sound health who for practical reasons are precluded, temporarily or permanently, from attending church at the ordinary hours of service, whether in large parishes or in small.

From the earliest times the Blessed Sacrament has

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been reserved from Mass to communicate such people : and when the great persecutions ended, and the toleration of Christianity made it possible to do so with safety and reverence, the Church adopted the general custom of keeping the Sacrament continuously reserved in parish churches, ready for such needs as might at any time arise. In England this practice, which was suppressed by Protestant violence in the sixteenth century, without any show of legality, is now again becoming widespread, as understanding increases and rational toleration extends.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SACRAMENTS (continued)

(i) *Penance*

THE authority of the Church for the sacrament of Penance (or Confession and Absolution) consists in the words of our Lord to the apostles recorded in *St. John* xx. 22, 23, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them ; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." This side of the grave, the Church has power either to forgive sins or to withhold forgiveness, in Christ's name ; and from the very earliest times has freely exercised this authority.

The practice of the Church with regard to this sacrament has, however, varied, mainly through two circumstances. (a) For some centuries the administration of the sacrament was attended with very considerable publicity, and long periods commonly elapsed before absolution was finally given to the penitent. Moreover, during the period of waiting the penitent remained excommunicate, and precluded for the most part even from non-communicating attendance at Mass. Apparently it was from the British Isles that the custom spread of treating the normal process of Penance as a private matter : and thus the manner of administering the sacrament was changed throughout the Church, quite properly, since Christ in ordaining the rite laid down no rules for its administration.

(b) Though the Church has always held that confession should be made to the bishop or priest of all mortal sins committed after Baptism, and absolution sought, yet very widely divergent views have prevailed at different times of what constituted mortal sin. In early days the term covered only a small number of very grave faults, such as murder, fornication, and apostasy (denying Christ, whether under threat of persecution or otherwise); but the tendency has been constantly to extend the number and kind of sins regarded as mortal; and sometimes the treatment of the subject by moral theologians has become so complex as to give the impression of considerable unreality.

The distinction between mortal and venial sins comes from the Bible (1 *John* v. 16-17), but is based on practical convenience, not on any deep-seated theological difference: it would sometimes present a difficult practical problem to determine whether a particular offence fell in the one class or in the other. Pending therefore the production of a satisfactory and authoritative moral theology in the Anglican obedience, it is difficult to do more than lay down broad principles for the use of the sacrament.

A mortal sin may be defined as one of such gravity as to constitute a barrier between the soul and the free course of the flow of God's grace. All such sins ought to be confessed to a priest, whose unquestionable authority to give absolution in suitable cases is fully recognized by the English Prayer Book in the exhortation before Mattins and Evensong, in the first of the long exhortations printed in the Mass, in the office for the visitation of the sick, and in the rite of ordina-

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tion of priests. The Anglican Church does not require Confession at any fixed interval; and therefore the grave responsibility of having recourse to Confession after the commission of mortal sins is laid upon the sinner himself alone; and if he refrains from seeking absolution he does so entirely at his own peril.

Ordinary prudence would seem to dictate that recourse should be had to the sacrament of Penance at least in any of the following cases: (*a*) if we have committed a mortal sin; (*b*) if we have committed a sin which we think may be mortal; (*c*) if we are not sure that our venial sins are forgiven; (*d*) if we find we need further grace to overcome our temptations; (*e*) if we find that our penitence is not really deep or our sense of the gravity of sin is not really sincere.

The reality bestowed in this sacrament is God's pardoning grace; the effect to the faithful penitent is reconciliation and strengthening. The confession is made to a priest, who absolves the penitent (unless he appears unrepentant or unbelieving), and with his consent sets him a "penance" (usually some prayer to say) as a firstfruits of his new life.

The priest is absolutely forbidden to reveal by word or sign anything which he has learned through the confession to any living being, in any circumstances, without the express leave of the penitent. In the confessional he sits in Christ's seat, and the "seal of Confession" precludes him from making any use of the knowledge he gains thereby. He may not even afterwards mention any such matter to the penitent himself without first obtaining leave, nor make any difference either in his personal or in his sacerdotal conduct towards him.

(ii) *Orders*

Holy Order is the sacrament by which the grace of the ministerial priesthood is perpetuated. In its fullness the priesthood is only possessed by the highest order of ministers, namely the bishops, to whom the apostles entrusted its succession (see Chapter IV, § ii). They alone have power to transmit to others the grace of the Holy Ghost for the work of the ministry; and they alone confer the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, which is, so to speak, the final ordination of the laity to their priestly status and lay ministry in the service of Christ.

The bishop then is the principal minister of divine grace, and subordinate ministers derive from him their authority to dispense the sacraments. They also depend on him for their authority to preach the gospel, since he has also been entrusted, from the apostles' time, with the duty of safeguarding and expounding evangelical truth (see Chapter IV, § i and § iii). Bishops are not infallible, either individually or collectively, and have no authority for teaching any new gospel other than that which was preached once. But it is their duty to keep that gospel undefiled with error, and to take such steps as may be necessary to secure both that it is intelligibly expounded to the people of each new generation, and that its requirements are satisfactorily applied to the changing circumstances of practical life. The third main duty of bishops is therefore that of government. They have to take authoritative steps to bind and to loose (*St. Matt.* xvi. 19; xviii. 18), that is, to make negative and positive directions and regulations as to discipline and organization.

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In the performance of this task apostolic custom required that they should take counsel, before arriving at any important and far-reaching decision, both with one another and with other prudent men of experience (see *Acts* xv. and compare page 55). As the organization of the Church became more fully developed this requirement was met by the institution of synods. Each bishop conferred with the clergy of his own diocese and any other counsellors whom he might think it desirable on any particular occasion to consult, and in local matters then promulgated his decision, made after such advice, for the acceptance of the faithful. More far-reaching problems were settled by a synod of the bishops of a province, sitting under their archbishop or metropolitan, or in some cases of the bishops over a still wider area ; and their conclusions were remitted to the individual bishops to carry out with the aid of their synods in the several dioceses.

The order of priests is subordinate to the bishops, and serves them as a body of assistant ministers. In the course of centuries, as dioceses grew larger and bishops proportionately fewer, the order of priests grew to be of great practical importance, since its members were usually in more direct touch with pastoral work than the episcopate, and many responsibilities have been thrust upon them which were in more primitive times regarded as part of a bishop's proper work. A priest has authority to teach the gospel, to conduct divine worship, and to minister the sacraments (except those of Ordination and Confirmation) ; and in practice he has to make on behalf of the bishop many important decisions relating to the welfare of his own parish. His functions include three sacerdotal

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actions which may not be performed by any lower grade of minister, or by the laity : he consecrates the Eucharist, ministers the word of absolution, and bestows the authoritative blessing of Almighty God.

The order of deacons exists to assist the bishop or priest in divine worship and in the practical side of administration of sacraments and pastoral care. Deacons are usually also admitted to preach. It is their special privilege at Mass to sing the gospel and administer the chalice.

These three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons constitute the Sacred Ministry. The Church has at various times recognized other "minor" orders of ministers to execute subordinate functions as utility may demand or occasion require, and in certain of these services women seem sometimes to have been employed.

The three sacred Orders are bestowed by the laying on of the bishop's hands with prayer. As in the case of Confirmation, the particular outward sign employed seems to have been appropriated to the rite by the apostles, since the inward grace had been promised by Christ without any recorded directions being given about the manner of its administration. The capacity thus conferred to minister in sacred things is an indelible grace which cannot be repeated, any more than Baptism. By this sacrament a man is permanently set apart : once a priest, always a priest. Just as a communicant may be an unworthy communicant, so a priest may be a bad priest, and the result disastrous to his own soul. But the unworthiness of a minister in no way invalidates the reality of the sacraments he ministers to others, since the sacraments are not his

gift, but Christ's through the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless it is obvious that a wicked priest may cause great scandal and in that way greatly hinder the work of the gospel: and therefore it is an element of special importance in the life of a priest that he should strive so to commend Christ in his own character and conduct that men may be attracted to Jesus.

(iii) *Matrimony*

Marriage is an institution that springs from one of the elementary instincts of human nature, an instinct which on the physical side mankind shares with the beasts. This instinct which leads mankind to mate is stated by Christ to form part of the divine constitution and plan of the world (*St. Mark* x. 6 ff.); and in the same passage he proceeds to show that the natural physical desires, which have been thus implanted in mankind by God, have also been provided by him with an appropriate means of satisfaction in the marriage of one man with one woman. Our desires then are not intended to be our masters here, any more than in any other department of morals; but are to find their fulfilment in the right way which the providence of God has furnished. Those who are not called to exercise a gift of continency are to marry.

Christian marriage entails two consequences—the procreation and education of children, and the mutual help, support, and society of husband and wife. This second object has grown very considerably in importance with the advance of civilization, without in the least diminishing the importance either of the possession of children, or of the due regulation of the primary sexual instinct upon which marriage is

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founded ; the neglect of it in bad marriages leads no less often to disaster than any other cause in modern life.

The sacrament of Christian marriage is unlike any other sacrament in that it is at the same time a natural ordinance of temporal life, and is also one of which the parties themselves are the ministers. The essential element in the rite is the mutual consent of the baptized Christian man and Christian woman to unite their lives in wedlock, followed by the consummation of their union. Provided that they are already members of the body of Christ, marriage constitutes a sacramental union between them, compared by St. Paul to the union between Christ and his Church (*Ephes.* v. 25-32), by virtue of which they are bound to live their lives wholly for each other and to render one another their due rights ; and it is further held to bestow upon them grace to live well in this state.

Two points need to be noticed : first, that in the absence of proof to the contrary the consummation of a marriage is presumed to have taken place ; and secondly, that the Church in order to guard against fraud requires that the consent of the parties should be given before accredited witnesses. The presence of the priest to pronounce a blessing on the marriage is desirable but not essential. Civilized countries uphold the Church in requiring proper witnesses of a marriage, of whom one must be a person (such as an Anglican priest in England) who is qualified by law to act as registrar of the proceedings.

So far we have spoken of Christian marriage. There are other forms of marriage in different parts of the world which the Church does not recognize as true

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marriage, because the contract into which the parties enter is not of life-long obligation, or permits a man to have more than one wife at a time. Some of these forms of contract are survivals from savage states of society in which polygamy flourished. But probably in these cases, as well as in all more modern instances, the laxity in question is originally due to the degeneration of earlier ideals and the corruption of a higher and more truly primitive practice. In other words, the Christian standard of marriage is based on a universal law of human nature.

In nominally Christian countries a civil contract of marriage is usually intended to conform to Christian standards and is accepted as a true marriage by the Church. Many such countries, however, allow the marriage to be dissolved later on in certain circumstances; to divorce in this sense the Church cannot give any countenance whatever. Our Lord's words forbidding the partners of a marriage to separate and contract new unions in the lifetime of the original partner are perfectly plain (*St. Mark* x. 2-12; *St. Luke* xvi. 18). Such remarriage is sin (compare *Rom.* vii. 1-3; *I Cor.* vii. 4, 10-11, 39; *Ephes.* v. 22-32).

The Church has, however, from early times allowed a separation (without remarriage) when owing to the fault of one partner life together has become clearly intolerable. Our Lord himself appears to sanction this in the one event of infidelity (*St. Matt.* v. 31-32; xix. 9); and certain other causes, such as brutal ill-treatment, obviously provide reasonable occasion for the same step. But even then the marriage is not dissolved; and if the wrong-doer shows proof of penitence, the door must be left open to forgiveness.

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The law of Christ contains no authorization for disregard in any circumstances of the sacramental union of husband and wife.

With regard to unions between heathens, the Church is free to deal with each case on its practical merits. On their conversion, the parties to a heathen marriage contract would naturally be held bound if the form and intention of the contract were approximately those of Christian matrimony. In other cases (such as not infrequently arise in the mission field) the parties are not bound, though doubtless one man with one wife should be encouraged to accept the obligations and privileges of Christian marriage (1 Cor. vii. 12-17).

(iv) *Unction*

The sacrament of Holy Unction is intended for Christians who are fallen into bodily sickness. The sick person is anointed with oil which has been blessed for the purpose by a bishop (in the East, however, by a priest), together with prayer for the healing of the body (subject, as all prayer is, to God's approval of the petition) and for the forgiveness of the sins which the sick man may have committed.

There is thus conveyed to the soul a strengthening spiritual grace by the Holy Spirit, "who is the spirit of all strength, comfort, relief, and gladness"; if it be his will the faithful and penitent recipient is restored to bodily health and strength to serve God further in this life, and release is bestowed him of "his pains, troubles, and diseases both in body and mind" (Prayer Book of 1549). It is quite in accordance with what we know of the intimate association and interconnection of soul and body, that a gift of

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spiritual grace should thus strengthen the body through the renewal of vigour in the soul ; and that this is a primary object of the rite is unquestionable. Its use with this specific object is perhaps particularly suitable in cases of chronic sickness.

In the East this purpose has never been overlooked. In the West, however, during the Middle Ages, the object of bodily healing was in practice almost forgotten. It was the custom, proper enough in itself, not to have recourse to Unction until all the aid which ordinary medical skill could bring had been exhausted ; and thus Unction came to be regarded as little if anything more than a preparation for death. This it may well be ; yet to treat it exclusively as such, without any hope or intention of securing physical alleviation if that should be the will of God, is a somewhat grave abuse of the sacrament. The result of this misleading conception of the object of Unction was for long its almost complete disuse in the Anglican obedience. Latterly, however, its use has revived among us, and it is now frequently employed for those who desire it.

The origin of the sacrament of Unction is to be found in the direction of Christ to the apostles, when they were sent out two and two, to heal the sick, apparently with the symbolical use of oil, the healing properties of which were held in esteem among the ancients (*St. Mark* vi. 7, 13). After Christ's ascension the apostles continued the practice of bodily healing (e.g. *Acts* iii. 1-10 ; v. 12-16 ; xxviii. 8, etc.), and in many cases at least visible signs beyond mere words were employed, consisting of the touch of the apostles' hands. It is also recorded that clothing taken from St. Paul's body was the means of producing similar

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effects (*Acts* xix. 11-12), though such instances can hardly be considered as in any sense sacramental.

So far there is no question of the use of Holy Unction. But a rite of an apparently sacramental character did exist in apostolic times, in which the particular outward sign of Unction together with prayer was employed by the ordinary clergy, to effect not merely bodily but also spiritual healing at one and the same time (*James* v. 14-15). It is uncertain whether the rite was already in common use when St. James wrote, or whether this particular sacramental sign was then instituted by St. James to give effect in a specific form to the general intention of Christ of alleviating suffering through the spiritual ministrations of the Church.

In spite of the recommendation of St. James that the sick should seek Unction at the hands of the clergy, for many centuries we find that oil for healing the sick was sometimes in fact not merely administered but even blessed by lay persons of eminent sanctity, including women. Such anointing may not unreasonably be held to have been of the nature of a "sacramental" (see below) rather than of a true sacrament. But from about the seventh or eighth century this custom was discontinued, and it was ordered that the oil to be employed for such a purpose should always be previously blessed by the bishop in the West, or in the East by a priest.

Beside the seven rites now commonly called sacraments, certain other acts of outward devotion which have been widely recognized both in ancient and modern times, such as the use of holy water, prostrations, and the sign of the cross, have occasionally been

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dignified by the name of sacraments, apparently on the ground that they express in some form an inward disposition of prayer, and so elicit hidden grace. These would now be called " sacramentals " : the term sacrament is usually confined to the seven rites enumerated above, for the principle of which (though not, in every case, for the outward form of administration) divine authority can be claimed.

CHAPTER IX

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

(i) *Human Responsibility*

THE moral life for Christians is based upon three assumptions about human nature, the correctness of which cannot be logically demonstrated (any more than the existence of God can be) ; which nevertheless in one form or another have very commonly been accepted both popularly and by philosophical thinkers outside the sphere of influence of the Christian religion.

The first of these assumptions is that man has a double nature, consisting of body and of soul (or mind); and in this case the Christian hypothesis is almost demonstrably true. A brain and a mind are two perfectly distinct things. Brains are highly complex, material objects, subject to infinitely varied and minute physical and chemical changes under the influence of material stimulus, such as that afforded by nervous currents. Minds have no direct connection with either chemistry or physics, but are capable of sensation and thought. Brains may alter internally in structure or composition : minds feel and think. It is as absurd to say that a brain thinks when physical changes occur in it, as it would be to say that a sausage thinks when it is subjected to the stimulus of the frying-pan, instead of saying merely that it cooks. Therefore, whatever a mind or soul is (and it is quite unnecessary to define

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this), it is clearly recognizable as something distinct from any part or action of our bodies.

The second assumption is that together with the possession of a soul we have a certain power of free choice in determining our actions. A purely material object, like the sausage of our illustration, is incapable of influencing its own fate and is at the mercy of outside influence. If it is fried it cooks : if, on the other hand, it is left exposed to the atmosphere, it goes bad. An organic object like a vegetable is in a similar case : by feeding and pruning and change of soil or atmosphere or climate a gardener can make a fruit-tree, for instance, either do or not do anything whatsoever that lies within the range of its particular kind. And in the same way even an animal, intelligent as some animals are, appears to have its conduct governed solely by a complex of instincts and impulses which arise from fixed and (theoretically) predictable causes. Of course it often suffers from a conflict of impulses ; but in the end its action seems to depend upon a mechanical, not a moral, settlement of the different impulses presented to it.

Mankind also possesses an animal nature. The individual nature with which each of us is endowed at birth as the material out of which to build his character and form his life, is a bundle of inherited capacities and tendencies, of which some may be common to the whole race, some may be shared by us with comparatively few others, and some again may be peculiar to ourselves and certain of our forefathers. We are also, like the animals, profoundly influenced by our surroundings. And a great part of our life proceeds automatically without any conscious interference or

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control. We breathe, we digest, we react to various forms of stimulus and perform many actions, we gather much experience and even form many conclusions of an intellectual character, without any effort of choice (or "free will") at all. Nevertheless occasions frequently do arise when we pause and consider what our action shall be or how we shall perform it ; and after consideration of various possibilities we are conscious of deliberately choosing one line of action, and if by nothing else, at least by a voluntary fixing and control of our power of attention upon it, we appear to add such force to the impulses of our choice as to make them (if we persevere) prevail over all others.

That is what we mean by free will, or, to use a clearer expression, freedom of choice. No two people start with exactly similar natures and tendencies or live their lives in a precisely identical environment ; and what is easy to one is often singularly difficult for another. But with whatever natural constitution we start, and under whatever moral influences we fall, we can by consistency and perseverance exercise a large measure of control over our own moral development.

This second assumption rests on common practical experience. The third necessarily cannot ; for it is that, by the will of God, our personal life begun here on earth is to continue for ever. This belief is partly grounded on the general aspiration of humanity for a future existence, and the sense of waste and futility aroused in cultured peoples at the prospect of extinction ; but it chiefly depends upon two dogmas of revelation.

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(a) Christ taught that the moral and spiritual life of a man is to be distinguished from his carnal and physical life, as being at once more real and more permanent. The temporal earthly life is but a transient phase ; but parallel with this and behind it is the true and eternal life of a person, which progresses along its own lines and according to its own standards irrespective of the ups and downs of the natural existence. This "supernatural" life—the life of the "spirit" as opposed to that of the "flesh," in St. Paul's phraseology—in which all merely temporal considerations are superseded, and everything is judged according to a scale of eternal and absolute values, is the life for which man is truly designed and created ; and after his earthly period of training and probation has been completed this eternal life will remain to him.

(b) The teaching of Christ about eternal life was confirmed by his own resurrection and ascension, which convinced the apostles (from whose evidence the Church derives its knowledge of those events) that his human life was not extinguished by death, but was rather endowed by resurrection with a great access of liberated power and energy.

Belief in the immortality of personal human life is of great importance in Christian morals, because if the life of this world were the only life it would indeed be hard, as the author of *Job* found, to assign a satisfactory motive for the endurance of temporal suffering ; but if we are able to look under the surface to the eternal life beneath, temporal suffering, though genuine enough, can be assessed at a very different spiritual value.

(ii) *The Ten Commandments*

When we grant that mankind possesses freedom of moral choice, we thereby allow him a real share in the control and direction of the affairs of this world ; in other words, we recognize that he has laid upon him the immense moral responsibility of being in some sense a fellow-worker with God, one who is able in some degree either to forward or to hinder the divine purposes. And if he is to be able to execute this trust with success, he must both learn a good deal about the character of God, and be trained to co-operate with God along the lines which God lays down for the government of the world. For these purposes his moral conduct must be subject to a covenant in which the terms of the partnership are contained.

The basis of such a covenant for the Jews lay in their adoption by God at Mount Sinai to be his chosen people and (as the event proved) his main channel of religious revelation to the race. Perhaps at that very time, perhaps later, this covenant was embodied in a series of regulations, known to us as the Ten Commandments. In the course of centuries these Commandments were developed and their significance was expanded ; yet they were never superseded, but remained a monument of moral instruction for all ages of Judaism.

Christ's attitude to the Commandments was typical. He did not abrogate them ; but treating them as the expression not of particular injunctions as heretofore, but of general moral principles, he sanctioned their re-interpretation by certain specific examples, of which illustrations have been collected by the author of the

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first gospel in the Sermon on the Mount (*St. Matt.* v. 21-37). He effected this mainly in two ways. (*a*) He taught that a given command must be regarded as covering all sins or duties of a like character, and in particular that it shall include in its reference the thoughts and words of man, his intentions and his desires, as well as his completed actions. (*b*) He taught that a prohibition directed against a particular offence was to be taken as enjoining the opposite duty.

Following these principles, the Church has retained the Ten Commandments in its teaching, and given them a wide spiritual interpretation; and they serve a very useful purpose, if rightly understood, as a summary of moral duties, and as a guide to the right direction of conduct. But it must be said that if they are not thus reinterpreted, but are taken merely in their literal sense, they are seriously inadequate and in some respects positively misleading.

The following table contains some suggestions for the right Christian interpretation of the Commandments. Each Commandment is first printed in short: then follows (*a*) its original meaning for the Hebrews, (*b*) its meaning for Christians.

I. *Thou shalt have none other gods but me.*

- (*a*) Of all tribal gods Jehovah alone to be worshipped by the Hebrews.
- (*b*) Reliance upon God as our Father, and dependence on him as the source of all strength and giver of all good: the suppression of all pride, rebelliousness, and self-conceit.

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II. *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, etc.*

- (a) Certain kinds of images of Jehovah forbidden because associated with heathenism.
- (b) Putting God as the first object in our lives, and seeking to do his will, instead of substituting our own schemes and desires for the will of God.

III. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.*

- (a) Vows made to Jehovah must be fulfilled.
- (b) Sincerity and truthfulness towards both God and man : reverence for God.

IV. *Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day : six days shalt thou labour, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.*

- (a) A taboo upon unnecessary labour on the seventh day (Saturday).
- (b) The right apportionment of our time, so as to secure—
 - (i) due time for worship every day, but especially on Sunday ;
 - (ii) diligence in useful forms of activity ;
 - (iii) necessary recreation.

V. *Honour thy father and thy mother.*

- (a) Reverent obedience to parents.
- (b) Duties to one's home and family, one's country, and society : unselfishness.

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VI. *Thou shalt do no murder.*

- (a) Murder forbidden.
- (b) All hatred and unkindness forbidden, whether of thought, word, or deed : love to be shown towards all mankind (i.e. a practical desire to do the best one can for them) : avoidance of giving any unnecessary pain.

VII. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

- (a) Forbidden to take another man's wife.
- (b) Purity and modesty and self-control required, in act and in speech and in desire. All forms of sensual self-indulgence and intemperance forbidden.

VIII. *Thou shalt not steal.*

- (a) Theft forbidden.
- (b) Honesty and generosity commanded : "sweating" or "profiteering" and everything dishonourable forbidden.

IX. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

- (a) Forbids defrauding another by means of legal perjury.
- (b) Charitableness and consideration to be shown, and every due allowance made for others : contemptuousness or superiority, and scandalous gossip or tale-bearing, alike forbidden.

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X. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, etc.*

(a) Forbids coveting another's property.

(b) Cheerfulness enjoined, and a right use of such material blessings as present themselves : envy, malicious discontent, and devotion to money forbidden.

(iii) *The Christian Moral Ideal*

The Ten Commandments, it will have been observed, deal with duties and actions and what we do, rather than with virtues and character and what we are. Yet what we are is a good deal more important than what we do, because the motive and purpose of our deeds makes so much difference, and the same action is often quite right in one set of circumstances and quite wrong in another.

That is what St. Paul found. Jewish morality, which was splendidly high compared with that of other ancient peoples, was concerned with deeds ; Christian morality, which requires a far higher standard still, is concerned more directly with character ; and that is the whole of the problem which St. Paul sums up in the contrast of " law " and " grace," or " letter " and " spirit." No one can succeed in maintaining absolute perfection in the performance of a complicated casuistic code of written regulations (" letter," " law ") ; but if we turn and look at the growth of inward character, developing under the dispensation of divine aid (" spirit," " grace "), we can claim the possibility of real moral progress and advance, and cheerfully accept the aim enjoined upon us by our Lord, " Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect " (*St. Matt.* v. 48).

Jesus Christ, then, before he founded the Church or

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instituted any sacramental means of grace, made the most sweeping possible moral claims upon his disciples. He found a lofty system of morality in vogue among the Jews, and transformed its basis from outward deeds to inward character. By doing so he made it in a way easier for sinners to act on, provided they consent to fight sin (so that the Church is a genuine hospital for the real cure of sinners), yet very much further-reaching in its aim and effect (so that the Church is equally a genuine school for the training of real saints). This system thus transformed he reinforced with tremendous moral sanctions, making it the foundation of his new religion. We cannot begin to be genuine Christians until we accept the law of Christ as our practical moral ideal and make at least a start of applying it in our lives.

The law of Christ may be summarized under four heads. (*a*) Righteousness claims our single-hearted devotion. No man can serve two masters : you cannot in the last resort serve God and money, or God and lust, or God and pride. Right must be done simply because it is right, regardless of the consequences : God must come first, and "the rest nowhere." We must therefore first be brought to acknowledge the claim which moral truth and righteousness make upon our allegiance, and develop a desire to meet and satisfy that claim.

(*b*) In order to do this a man must get absolute mastery and control over himself. We have numerous instincts and impulses, which in themselves are neither good nor bad : the goodness or badness comes in with the use we make of them. And, in order to win control, we have not merely to avoid sin, but to "carry the war into the enemy's country" and go out of our

way to break the power of temptation—to learn the art of re-directing our impulses into channels often the contrary of what they would naturally be ; to employ them in doing many things we should not otherwise need to do, and to do without many things which we should otherwise enjoy.

This is called “ mortifying the flesh,” that is, killing our unredeemed nature. And a Christian remembers that death is not destruction, but a preliminary step in the process of liberating our powers in a new direction for fresh forms of service ; consequently when “ the flesh ” has been killed it has to “ rise again to a new life of righteousness ” : in other words, our nature has to be re-directed with fresh energy into “ supernatural ” channels of righteousness and holiness.

(c) Then, with our singleness of aim confirmed and our whole nature in process of being brought under full control, we have to serve God. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart (will) and mind (intelligence) and soul (faculties) and strength (perseverance). We have to make the decision of will, that whatever the will of God may be we will try to carry it out ; to employ our intelligence in order to learn what the will of God is, in general principles, and to train and enlighten our conscience so that it may prove a true and ready guide on particular occasions ; to engage and devote all the faculties of our being in his service and obedience ; and to persevere in spite of every failure and difficulty experienced in this course.

Clearly one of the most important things in the Christian life is to have a true sense of values, and to estimate life and the things of life at their eternal rather than at their temporal worth ; for the Christian

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life is the eternal life (see page 123). The Beatitudes (*St. Matt.* v. 3-10) indicate the moral indifference of such circumstances as poverty, bereavement, privation, and persecution, and the essential importance of such virtues as humbleness, forgiveness, purity, and peaceableness. The one thing needful is that we should learn to love and trust the character of God, which was revealed under human conditions in the person of Jesus Christ ; and by diligent submission and the use of all the aids he gives us, to form our own characters after the same supernatural and eternal model.

(d) Finally, we must love our fellow-men. Our existence in a whole world of human beings gives us ample scope and opportunity for the exercise of those virtues or excellences which we discover in God. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" : and as we should seek for ourselves whatever is highest and best, so should we strive to bring the best and highest within our neighbour's grasp as well.

Two observations may here be made upon this subject. First, by our neighbour Christ means not only those with whom we are in closest and most frequent contact, but, in so far as we have opportunity of serving them, every member of the human race. There is in Christ no distinction of class or caste or race or colour or progress or civilization or creed, but simply one common humanity. "Christ called himself, not *the Light of Nazareth*, or *the Light of the Jews*, or *the Light of Asia*, but *the Light of the world* (*St. John* viii. 12), because his love was world-wide ; and he called his disciples by the same name (*St. Matt.* v. 14), to show them that their love must be world-wide too." Every true Christian is a missionary at heart.

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Secondly, because we want to give to all men what is best and highest, there is no reason why we should neglect their temporal needs. On the contrary, as Christ did, we are bound to relieve and satisfy to the best of our capacity the mental and physical requirements of our fellows. This does not mean indiscriminate almsgiving ; but it does imply that either directly or through suitable agencies we must take the best steps we can to relieve and prevent distress, provide employment (which is the natural means of livelihood) for the workless, and maintain a decent and tolerable and ample standard of life for all, whether Christian or pagan, civilized or savage.

It is not the business of the Church to take sides in purely political disputes. Politics are very often concerned with differences of opinion over proposed social experiments, or with the problem of deciding between various methods of giving practical effect to the objects which all parties are agreed in desiring to see accomplished ; and upon such matters honest and good men may legitimately disagree. But it is the duty of the Church to preach and maintain that the principles of right and wrong are eternal and divine ; and that nothing can bring true peace and true happiness to the world but the fearless application by private persons and by governments alike, whether in domestic or international concerns, of Christian principles to daily life.

Many (if not most) of the humanitarian social revolutions of the past have owed their inspiration indirectly to the teaching of the Church ; and if genuine progress is to be made in human affairs, Christian principles must still be employed to inspire and direct our schemes for the betterment of the world.

CHAPTER X

SIN, GRACE, AND ATONEMENT

(i) *Human Nature's Moral Disease*

IF there is one unmistakable fact which everybody can observe in his own life and prove from his own experience it is the fact of sin. Whether a man's moral ideal be noble or debased, and whether his level of conduct in general be high or low, anyone who reflects on the matter at all is well aware that upon many occasions he has failed to do what he ought, and has done what he ought not. And what makes the matter worse is that sin is not due merely to ignorance, or even to carelessness : often a man knows well enough what is right and even has a desire to act upon it, but nevertheless chooses to do wrong : "The good which I would, I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I practise" (*Rom. vii. 19*). There is something that induces him to sin against the light, whatever his light may be.

This failing is not one that is confined to the experience of individual lives. Mankind is born into an environment which is infected with the same disease. Social groups and even whole nations sin grievously, and that not necessarily because they are led astray by leaders or governments, but because they themselves prefer violence to justice, and selfishness to truth, and the hope of material advantage to righteousness and humanity. And it constantly happens that a large

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body of people acting jointly rushes into far worse excesses than any member of the mass composing it would think of committing were he acting singly : the sense of responsibility is lost as numbers increase.

It is not the case, then, when practical problems of morality arise, and mankind either individually or corporately is presented with a number of different impulses, that their judgement always makes a calm and unbiassed choice between them. There is in human nature as we ordinarily know it a powerful drag upon the will, which not infrequently makes it very difficult to do right, and perversely tends to carry men in a direction contrary to their principles and objective, just as the undertow of a current carries a swimmer away from the shore. This drag is known in theology by the term "Original Sin"; a singularly misleading name (since theology itself teaches that the matter in question is neither original nor sin) for what would perhaps be better called inherited moral disease.

In reaction from the abominable doctrine that human nature is totally depraved, in the sense that there is nothing good in it at all, some people deny the existence of any corruption at all. Now, to deny the existence of any good in the natural composition of mankind is certainly clean contrary to all human experience. There is some good in the most depraved person alive. But, on the other hand, there is no evidence that any one finds the choice between right and wrong courses of action a matter of invariable unbiassed simplicity. Probably even the best of mankind have experienced in themselves the power of a certain strain of degeneracy. As no one can live to himself alone, uninfluenced by the persons and things around

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him, so none of us is born without trace or mark of his ancestry. We are all born into a common heritage of life in which there is an element of evil: and this corrupt element manifests itself in every department of human life.

(ii) *The Fall*

The greatest controversy rages round a further question: How did this corruption of human nature originate? Was there a time in the history of mankind when the corruption did not exist; when "original righteousness," or at least, what is a more exact term, "original innocence," did exist? Or is this so-called corruption not the result of any degeneration at all, but an original constituent of our being?

The ancient Hebrews ascribed the existence of sin to individual disobedience. In the religious myth or parable of the Fall (*Gen. iii.*) they pictured the ancestors of the race as being originally innocent, in a state of probation under which perfect righteousness might have been achieved, and as yielding to the temptation of wilful self-indulgence. For long they seem to have been content to believe that every man is in the same position as his original ancestors, and do not appear to have connected the prevalence of sin with any inherited taint. But the acute religious consciousness of the later Jews at last began to recognize the existence of a defect in human nature itself, and sought to account for it on theological grounds. They were convinced that God is good, and the author of good: it followed that this diseased element must be due to some definite rejection, in one form or another, by the

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race itself of the uncontaminated righteousness in which God created mankind to live. Finally, the Jews of one school of thought concluded that the corruption must have been transmitted from our original human ancestors, who were the first to sin, to all the members of the race descended from them.

Christian theology was led in course of time, as it considered the question, to form a similar conclusion. And it is, and must be, upon grounds of theology that the Christian doctrine of the Fall mainly rests. There obviously cannot be any possible direct evidence whatever about the moral constitution of the first human beings, whether they consisted of many distinct pairs, or (as scientists at present incline to suggest) of one single pair. The existence of sin is an observed fact, and its practically universal prevalence most strongly points to a moral disease in human nature as a contributory cause of its existence, a hypothesis which is supported by the experience of religious men. But only a theology can claim that when God first began to create beings who were distinctively human he must have designed them to possess an unimpaired capacity for moral progress towards perfection, such as the race does not now possess, though Jesus did.

The quasi-biological reply that "acquired characteristics" cannot be inherited is really beside the point. This theory has not yet been finally proved true even of physical acquirements; but even if it is true, it would not seem to apply to the moral and spiritual evil under discussion. The disease is not anything new introduced into human nature, which was not there before. It is a form of racial degeneration in the moral rather than the physical sphere: we have in some

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degree reverted to the moral condition of animals which have never enjoyed that freedom of moral choice which theology claims as the distinctive endowment of the first human beings, as opposed to the animal creation. We ought, as responsible agents, to control our impulses, but in point of fact we partly fail to fulfil our obligation. The impulses which lure and goad us into sin might have been present anyhow : but if we were not morally diseased we might have been able to present a complete resistance to them.

Nevertheless it is worth while considering the possible alternative to the doctrine of inherited moral disease transmitted from the Fall. It may be stated as follows. Mankind on the physical side, in other words the human body, is the result of an evolutionary process which has passed through many stages. In the course of this process certain organs have been developed, which were necessary for the time being to the physical life of the animal out of which man was evolved, but at a later stage were not required and have become atrophied. Such an organ is the appendix, which now performs no known practical function in the body.

According to the theory of evolutionary moralists, civilized morality has been evolved in a somewhat similar way. Men have discovered by experience, whether subconsciously or otherwise, that certain practices are useful and certain others harmful to individuals and the race : the former therefore have been accepted as involving obligation, the latter repudiated as immoral. But in earlier stages of the process practices were accepted which have since lost the utility they once possessed, like the appendix in

the body ; and the fact here called inherited moral disease is really to be explained by the survival and persistence into a later stage of moral growth, of impulses that have outlasted their purpose but still wait to be completely eradicated.

This superficially alluring theory is very difficult to maintain seriously.

(a) In point of fact the sanction of morality is not self-interest, whether conscious or unconscious, individual or racial. Christian morality in particular claims that there is an absolute distinction between right and wrong, which must respectively be supported or avoided solely from their own intrinsic value, and not for any benefit which may accrue either to the individual or to the whole race of mankind. In this attitude most pagan moralists support the Church.

(b) The analogy with physical organs such as the appendix is entirely false. The moral weakness of human nature (whatever its origin) is a positive present evil. But the appendix presents no obstacle whatever to the proper functioning of the body unless it happens to become diseased, an event to which every portion of the body is equally liable. In itself the appendix is quite harmless.

(c) It is true that science can point to certain upward movements in the evolutionary process ; but it can also point to instances of degeneration. In particular, it may be pointed out that in the evolution of the ancestors of man the apes branched off from the human stock, while the human stock itself held on upon a higher level of development which finally culminated in the production of genuine men with human self-consciousness and at least such a measure

of freedom of moral choice as we now enjoy. And it seems fairly clear that certain ape-like human fossil remains represent degenerate specimens of the human species which are now extinct, but occurred after the ancestors of mankind had reached the human level. In the same way such savage tribes as still exist probably do not at all represent primitive man as he first was, but as he has deteriorated or, at best, remained stagnant. So that there is some important scientific evidence (i) for actual instances of degeneration in the human stock, and (ii) for the belief that, up to the point at which they reached the level of self-determining human beings, the ancestors of the human race actually had risen superior to the fate which befell their brethren the progenitors of the various species of apes, and that equally at that point they may have surpassed the moral condition into which certain savage tribes and indeed civilized peoples have since declined.

(d) A certain evolutionary development can be traced in the prevalence of particular sins. A child's temptations and sins are far from being identical with the temptations and sins of a grown man: and the failings to which large numbers of people are prone vary considerably at different periods of history—at one time drunkenness is most common, at another cruelty or class hatred, at another commercial dishonesty. Particular failings then are often discarded. But not so the fact of sin. Its manifestations vary, but the fact is constant. In other words, mere moral evolution may supersede particular sins, but does not in the very least degree eradicate sin. The tendency to sin still remains an unabated evil, which on ethical grounds demands an explanation and an ending, and

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cannot possibly be acknowledged as an essential, original, and permanent element in human nature.

We may therefore claim that, apart from all question of the authority of special inspiration, the Christian doctrine of an inherited corruption stands firm, and the Church was wholly right to adopt it as the foundation of her theology of grace. The doctrine of the Fall shows that the evil in mankind is due not to God but to human self-will; and the theology of grace holds out the hope and promise of that evil being genuinely and completely conquered.

(iii) *Sin*

Inherited moral disease (as has been said) is not sin, but a defect in human nature which is the result of sin and also leads to more sin. Sin itself, or “actual sin,” means disobedience to the will of God.

Sins may belong to either of two classes, those of *commission* (doing what is wrong) or of *omission* (failing to carry out a duty). Sins of commission may be further distinguished under three heads: they may be either of *thought*, by encouraging evil suggestions or desires in the mind; or of *word*, by saying things which for any reason ought not to be said; or of *deed*, by performing sinful actions.

It may be added that sins of thought frequently lead to sins of word or deed, and that sins of omission must not be treated more lightly than sins of commission. For instance, people who cherish hatred or lust in the mind thereby diminish their power of will, so that they are less able to control impulses to action of a corresponding kind: and failure to fill the mind with holy and good thoughts, or to perform duties of love

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and righteousness, leaves the more room for contrary motions and the less barrier against them.

Inasmuch as all sin is disobedience, it implies not only that a law or commandment exists, so as to be broken, but also that the sinner knows, or ought to know, that his action is wrong. Consequently, the more complete the consent of a person's will is to a wrong action, the more grievous is any sin that he commits. And the clearer a person's knowledge is of right and wrong, the greater is his moral responsibility and the greater is his sin in yielding.

Moreover, Christ quite definitely insisted that the knowledge of God's will, disobedience to which constitutes sin, implies far more than merely the knowledge of a particular set of ecclesiastical rules of conduct. The Pharisees kept their own rules of life strictly ; but Christ assailed them persistently and unflinchingly for neglecting the dictates of ordinary humanity, which they ought to have recognized as being one of the methods by which the will of God for man is expressed. We must therefore clearly understand that failure to maintain natural standards of morality which mankind has inferred directly from the very constitution of human nature, is disobedience to God, and sin, as much as disregard of an express command of Christ.

Certain points also need to be remembered on the other side. First, temptation and sin are two perfectly different things and must be carefully distinguished. This is particularly important in regard to sins of thought. No one can avoid being tempted altogether, and no one was tempted more powerfully than Christ himself, who none the less never sinned. A temptation

may strongly assail the mind, and be difficult to master and cast out ; but there is no sin unless the person tempted consents in some degree to the temptation—unless the evil impulse is allowed, if not to cause an action, at least to become an acknowledged desire.

Secondly, the grievousness of a sin is diminished in proportion as it is committed without wilful deliberateness or full knowledge of its character and consequences. But sins cannot be excused if the person has contributed to them by previous neglect of self-control or by the formation of bad habits, or by wilful want of thought, or if he has voluntarily put himself into a situation in which it was reasonably probable that the temptations met would prove too strong for him to resist.

We must sincerely fight our “ besetting sins ” (the sins into which we most frequently fall), and honourably avoid unnecessary “ occasions of sin ” (the situations which are particularly dangerous for us, though innocent in themselves) ; and the fact that we have evil influences around us should make us the more careful to decline doing anything which we know to be wrong, even to death, like the martyrs. It is a sound rule to resist the first beginnings of temptation, and so far as possible remove ourselves from its influence by changing our occupation or our company ; once sin has made a little breach in our defences and got a little hold, it is far more difficult for us to dislodge it.

(iv) *Grace and Atonement*

In order to provide us with human strength to combat sin effectively, Christ came down from heaven to fight and conquer sin as man. He recreated human

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nature by his incarnation, sanctified it by his life, offered it to God by his death and resurrection, and then returned as man to heaven, whence he pours the riches of his grace upon those who trust him. His life gives us an example, and gives us grace—two very different things, as the Church has always taught, both in her documents, inside and outside the New Testament, and in her liturgies, or forms of public worship. The example sets us a standard ; grace empowers us to rise and attain to that standard.

The word “ grace ” means favour ; grace is the gift which God bestows of his own good pleasure upon men of goodwill. It is essentially the influence of a personality upon personalities, and is to be gained by men through personal contact in some form or other with God. Two consequences follow from this : first, that grace is not exclusively confined to the Christian dispensation ; and, secondly, that prayer (including of course sacrificial and sacramental forms of prayer) is the primary means of grace.

Without the aid of this divine influence man cannot, especially in his fallen state, live rightly or serve God. But, on the other hand, by whatever means men gain any genuine communion or personal intercourse with God, they thereby acquire grace. And even before any motion takes place of the human spirit towards truth and God, grace is present (because God is present) waiting to co-operate with the slightest movement Godwards, and even striving to elicit such a movement from the human personality. Grace is therefore technically distinguished into “ prevenient grace ” (before human response) and “ co-operating grace.”

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A clear understanding of the nature of grace thus leads to a clear solution of the old controversy over free-will. Man cannot of himself do right without the help of grace, and is not in fact given the opportunity, because God is always striving to influence him ; yet the power of grace is not irresistible, and God, by his own decree, is powerless to help a man who resists his grace. Since personal influence is perfectly compatible with individual independence, the need of grace is perfectly reconcilable with free-will ; indeed, it is grace which makes our wills truly free (see *St. John* viii. 31-37).

It is then more strictly accurate to say that Christ came to give us more grace, than merely that he came to give us grace. What is, however, far more important still, is that he came to give it through new and more intimate channels, by human means, in virtue of the human nature which he took upon himself.

Yet before grace could have its full effect another work remained to be accomplished. Sin entails the consequence of estrangement from God, in two ways. From God's side, because God is just and righteous, sin must be purged out by the voluntary and complete submission of the offending will to the cleansing and amending fire of punishment : " satisfaction " must be given. And from man's side, atonement is required by a perfect offering of self-sacrifice in order to renew and restore the will, which has been impaired by falling, to the fulness of living power. But this perfect sacrifice and satisfaction were just what man with his impaired will had made himself incapable of rendering.

Christ therefore came to do for man in one sense, but only in one sense, what man could not do for him-

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self. In his life and death and resurrection, of which the central feature throughout was the cross, he made of himself a perfect human oblation or offering. That makes the cross of Christ the paramount example through all time for human conduct.

But Christ did far more than this. He gave by grace, to men who surrender to his grace, a share in the possession of his Spirit, whereby a real unity is begun between Christ and believers—a spiritual unity which no more destroys distinction and individuality than the unity between the Persons of the Trinity. By grace, in this state of unity, men are nourished upon his perfect life, and as they grow in Christ they grow in sacrifice, offering themselves more and more fully in submission and renewal to God ; until at the end of our course the Christian hope is for a perfect union with Christ and a completed reconciliation with God.

The cross of Christ did not save all men ; rather it made it possible for all men to be saved. Again, it saves no one by substitution. Christ sacrificed himself only in order to enable us by union with him to sacrifice ourselves. The offering which he made upon the cross was an offering in his own person of all who should believe on him : it has its counterpart in the Mass, in which we make the offering of ourselves in him to God ; and this offering has to be made good in our lives. Man owes himself to God as a satisfaction for sin, as a sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation, and as an oblation of perfect obedience : he can only pay the debt through Christ, nevertheless he can only pay it himself. The cross can only save me when I myself by grace have been crucified ; after Calvary

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there yet remains a supplement to be completed on my part (compare *Coloss.* i. 24) : and I am only justified—accounted righteous—inasmuch as I am in the process of being sanctified or made a saint (*Rom.* v.).

The normal means which Christ provided for effecting unity with himself, for feeding on his life, and for receiving certain other particular gifts of grace, is through the sacraments. This is not to say that he has bound himself to save by no other means ; but it does imply that men who will to be saved, and have the knowledge of his gospel of grace, are bound to seek salvation by the means which he ordained.

CHAPTER XI

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

(i) *Conversion*

CHRIST has done his part for men : if men desire to claim their share in Christ's work, the means whereby to do so is faith, with repentance. These two together constitute conversion.

(a) *Faith*. Faith contains several distinct elements, which must all be present in a true conversion.

(i) First, it involves an intellectual belief that God exists, and desires man's love and service : it also involves a belief that Christ, the Son of God, became man for us men and for our salvation, and died for our sins and rose again for our justification ; and that he sends the Holy Spirit to unite us to himself, and nourish our souls by the means of grace. A full and detailed knowledge of all that is implied in the above beliefs is not necessary for the beginning of a true and living faith, though it is most desirable that a believer should go on to learn more deeply about the truths of religion : but without an implicit belief in these simple principles no faith can have any reality at all.

(ii) Secondly, the Christian must have a real trust in God. He must be prepared to throw himself without reserve upon God's truth, mercy, and love. He must be ready to accept and welcome whatever truth God teaches him, whatever ideals God sets before him, whatever claims God makes upon him, whatever sacri-

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fices God requires of him ; and he must be satisfied with whatever gifts and consolations God in his wisdom sends him, whether for body or soul. The Christian always walks in the hope of things as yet unseen.

Such a practical trust does not often spring into full growth in a night, and that is why Christ so frequently insisted on our need for strengthening our faith ; but the essence and root of it all is the voluntary desire to rely on God instead of ourselves. It may be added that such a trust, so far from weakening individual initiative and destroying individual energy, has the very reverse result, because it implies that nothing we are called to do or undergo is futile or can fail to have its due effect in some way or another.

(iii) Thirdly, faith involves renunciation. Loyalty to God must mean exclusive loyalty, or else be meaningless. The world, the flesh, and the devil have to be renounced, and God enthroned in our desires and aims. We must at all times hate everything that is evil, and fight against it : and the exigencies of God's service often require us to give up a great deal that is perfectly innocent, because that service has the first claim upon us. Nevertheless Christian "other-worldliness" does not for a moment imply that we should hypocritically underestimate the value of this world (which God creates) ; it is only intended to teach us the right value of the things of this life and to direct their use in right ways and for right objects.

All the truth, the beauty, and the goodness of this world have to be recognized in a complete Christian view of life. Only it must be remembered that they reflect the glory of the Creator, and consequently our devotion to them must not be allowed to override our

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devotion to him. Harmless desires and innocent ambitions contribute part of the conditions and incitements of our service ; they only become damnable if in order to pursue them for their own sake we desert our service and apostatize from duty.

(iv) Fourthly, faith, in this full sense of the word, implies love. It is worth noticing that when St. Paul wrote his hymn of love in 1 *Corinthians* xiii. he made love the crown and fulfilment of faith. "Now we see in a mirror, darkly, but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I have been known. Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is love."

Hope involves acquiescence in the will of God : love means devotion to it. Acquiescence must come first ; love follows from the practice of obedience. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" (*St. John* xiv. 21). Christian love is a very practical matter, and involves nothing less than the joyful dedication of the whole man to the service of God, and (because God is a Spirit that loves mankind) to the service of man.

(b) *Repentance*. The moral claims of Christianity are so sweeping and its standards are so high, that in practice every serious person finds shortcomings in his conduct. He has done things he ought not to have done, and left undone things he ought to have done : in himself he is morally sick, a sinner, and apart from the hope of the gospel he would be in a miserable case. The cure for this condition is repentance.

Repentance contains three elements.

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(i) Contrition. The first step towards better things is regret for the past. This is quite distinct from remorse, which means despair, and is a suicidal state of mind, both for religion and for sanity ; contrition is merely sorrow for sins which a man well knows are capable of being forgiven.

(ii) Confession. It is a clear psychological fact of human nature that deliverance from guilt requires an outward expression of dissociation from the sin on the part of the sinner. It is not always possible to make this act of dissociation by deeds, but it is always possible to do so verbally. In other words, sin in order to be forgivable must be confessed. The Bible and everyday life provide abundant illustration of this truth.

A Christian should confess grave (or mortal) sins to the Church, acting through its minister. There are two reasons for this. First, all sin is primarily an act of disobedience to the divine law of the world, an offence against God : and in the sacrament of Penance God has given us an authoritative means of obtaining pardon. But, secondly, any act of disobedience to the law of life is also an offence against society, for whose well-being the law exists, and whose complete well-being is injured by infringement of the law, since no one can live to himself alone without contributing some spiritual influence on others in the world ; and confession to the Church is a recognition that the sinner needs not only God's forgiveness but that of his fellow-sinners too. So St. James says, " Confess therefore your sins one to another " (*James* v. 16), and Jesus Christ accordingly gave to his apostles the power of the keys which admit to forgiveness and grace (*St. Matt.* xvi. 19 ; *St. John* xx. 23).

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(iii) Satisfaction. So far as practicable a penitent person will attempt to repair any injuries he has inflicted. In some few cases this can to a considerable extent be effected literally with respect to the injury done to men. But if we turn from law to gospel, from actions to character, it is obvious that the most important form of satisfaction which a sinner can make is an act of mortification of sin and re-consecration to truth and righteousness, because by such an act he pays his debt both to God and to human society (including his own self). Repentance, therefore, includes genuine resolution of amendment of life; and in sacramental Confession the penitent is always asked if he will accept some definite "penance" as an earnest of the better life he hopes to lead.

It is the work of a lifetime to bring the work of conversion to full fruition, since faith will always need to grow, and repentance will always need to be renewed, for the vast majority of mankind. But active spiritual life cannot begin until in some form and by some means—whether by the imperceptible growth of a tranquil Christian education, or through the racking strain of a severe moral struggle, or by a sudden illumination of the soul, or by whatever other experience it may happen—a man has been converted and turned to his God.

(ii) *Prayer*

We are all conscious of the variety of methods by which we hold communication with our fellow-men, by words, looks, signs, and even, as seems probable, by the direct influence of thought on thought and mind on mind, of which telepathy furnishes occasional

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examples, though the fact itself is far more common than are successful instances of deliberate telepathic communication. We hold communication similarly with God in a variety of ways, of which the general name, that covers all the different methods, is prayer.

Prayer may be distinguished under the three heads of vocal, mental, and sacramental. Of the last nothing need be said here (since the subject has been already treated in an earlier chapter) except that in practice sacramental prayer is always accompanied by prayer of one or both of the other varieties. Of these others, however, some consideration is required.

(a) *Vocal prayer.* This expression means communication which on our side is conducted through the medium of words, either uttered aloud or expressed in the mind. All common public prayer must necessarily belong in the main to this class, and few people ever altogether dispense with it in their private devotions, though some employ it more than others. Vocal prayer comprises five elements :—

Thanksgiving for the continual spiritual and temporal blessings of God.

Confession of our sins, with prayer for forgiveness.

Adoration of God's Person and power and character.

Petition for our own spiritual and temporal needs, and those of the people about us and connected with us.

Intercession for the human race to which we belong, and for the progress of God's work in the world in which we live.

The nature of the things for which we pray under the last two heads will give us some idea of the objects

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upon which our hearts are in fact chiefly set. There are some things which are certainly God's will, other things are morally indifferent, others again are certainly wrong. We must not pray for these last objects, we may pray for the second, we ought to pray chiefly for the first. That is the meaning of Christ's command to ask in his name (*St. John* xvi. 23, 24). An envoy only speaks in the name of his master when he delivers the message with which he has been charged : and a Christian only prays in Christ's name when he asks for the fulfilment of the will of Christ and the desires of his sacred heart.

If we keep this fact always in our minds when praying, we shall merely rejoice when the answer to some request happens to be, No. And further it removes the chief objection sometimes brought against petitionary prayer, namely, that it is absurd to suppose God would ever change and repudiate his will to suit the manifold and conflicting desires of human beings. Of course, he would not. But it is his will, alike agreeable to rational reflection and expressly revealed by Christ, that the men whom he has set in the world to co-operate with him in governing it should help to forward his designs by asking for the objects which they truly need and his work requires. Intercessory and petitionary prayers are not intended to thwart God's will, but to make it possible, by offering the human co-operation which he desires, for him to execute it.

(b) Mental prayer. This expression covers all kinds of communication with God made without the use of words or outward signs. It is often employed by the devout Christian almost unconsciously in connexion

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with vocal prayer, and often when he is hardly aware that he is praying at all. Nevertheless it contains certain distinct features, particularly in the earlier stage called "meditation":—

Thinking. There are countless matters upon which it is desirable for a Christian to reflect devoutly : God's being, his mercy and love to man, and man's own response, are subjects which embrace the whole field of human knowledge. A person who would grow in grace must "think on these things," with the aid of the Holy Spirit who inspires all Christian prayer.

Feeling. When we set ourselves thus in our prayer to think upon any matter in its relation to God, we usually do it with the object of kindling our own feelings with renewed love and devotion towards him : and as our hearts are warmed by these thoughts of God we naturally tell him so, in the simplest way, and ask him to increase our devotion to him, making brief acts of prayer, with or without the use of actual words.

Willing. Just as thinking should stir us up to feel, so our feelings should arouse our will. Perhaps we shall be led to make some definite resolution as the outcome of our prayer. But even if no such resolution presents itself, we shall have exercised our wills already in the acts of prayer just referred to, in which we have made an effort to deepen our faith and penitence and love in some particular and practical direction.

Learning. The whole process of meditation would lose most of its point if it were only concerned with our own reflections. From beginning to end of it we must remember that we are thinking with God, and the more his thoughts enter into our meditation and supersede our own, the better our object is being

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achieved. So we put ourselves as far as possible into a spiritual attitude of dependence, trust, and pupilage, seeking that he may teach us : like a child walking with its father, we try to walk with God and look into his face and catch the expression of his heart and mind reflected there.

Clearly it is possible to employ ourselves in mental prayer of an informal kind at any time and in any circumstances which do not demand our concentrated attention upon earthly things. But probably for most people it is wisest to set apart a certain time in each day or at least in each week for mental prayer. At such times different people find help in a variety of methods. To some people thoughts readily occur which lead to prayer. Others find such thoughts suggested by prayerful reading of some portion of the Bible. Some begin by reflecting upon a particular virtue which they need ; others by forming a mental picture of some circumstance in the life of Christ or of one of his saints ; others again by dwelling on the fact of God's intimate presence and friendship always with them.

But the method does not matter, so long as it leads to the prayer : and as people progress in mental prayer they often find they have less and less need of any formal method, but are able to plunge at once into the prayer itself. When this happens their prayer becomes more and more simple, further and further removed from the possibility of putting any part of it into words ; only they know that in stillness they are waiting upon God, that he is present with their souls, and that they are offering themselves and their lives to him.

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And God visits some souls in even closer communion. Through severe trials and difficulties, discouragements and disappointments, they are called to persevere in their prayer ; and these must be endured, not for our own sake but for God's who calls us ; until without conscious thought and effort the experience comes of his inward presence in the depth of our being, and with that experience, wonder and repose and satisfaction beyond human expression.

(iii) *The Rule of Life*

Every Christian needs a rule of life, whether it be written down on paper or memorized in his mind. Without it, he is the prey of every whim and impulse : with it, he knows not only the goal towards which he is making in his spiritual life, but also the road by which he is proposing to reach there.

Every rule of life should cover five distinct departments :—

(a) *Prayer*. A Christian no more thinks of beginning or ending the day without prayer than he does normally of going to work without breakfast or to bed without supper. The amount of time he spends in prayer is less important than the quality of his prayer ; the latter must be the best and most unselfish of which he is capable, the former is a matter for individual arrangement. It is also most desirable that for a few moments at least he should re-dedicate himself at some time midway in the day's course.

It is not essential that all the five elements of vocal prayer should necessarily find a place in our prayers at every time we pray ; but our prayers should be so arranged as to include all these branches in the course

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of the day. Nor must we omit to make some such regulation as may be necessary to secure that we are regular in mental prayer and in reading of the Bible or other spiritual books. And however difficult or discouraging a work prayer may sometimes prove to be, we can only advance by perseverance in the keeping of our rule ; remembering that failure to persevere at such times spells retreat and failure indeed.

In addition to private prayer a Christian should have a rule about public worship. The practice of apostolic Christianity and of the early Church was to hear Mass at least upon every Sunday, and this was apparently all that was of positive obligation, though strong encouragement was given to attendance at such services as are now represented by our divine office of Mattins and Evensong. The least obligation of an instructed Christian has been recognized throughout Catholic history as requiring him to join in the celebration of Mass on Sundays and a small number of other holy days, unless positively hindered by grave cause. Deacons and priests are also bound to the daily recitation of the divine office.

Another practice which, though not of obligation, is of immense spiritual benefit, is that of retreat. It is sanctified by the frequent example of Christ himself (e.g. *St. Mark* i. 12 ; vi. 31), and is alluded to by St. Paul (1 *Cor.* vii. 5). In recent times the crowded activity of ordinary life has given fresh value and importance to seasons of retreat, and has led to their organization and the provision of special facilities in Retreat Houses. A retreat may be made either by one person alone or by a number under a common leader, and for longer or shorter periods. Nothing else has

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the same value as a retreat in enabling a believer without distraction to come face to face alone with God and realities, and to derive thereby a true vision of himself and a fervent inspiration for his life. An excellent rule is to make a retreat of two to four days either every year or in each alternate year.

Some men and women are called by God to a whole life in which prayer is the first and main activity. The response to this call in the earliest times usually took the form of the life of a hermit or solitary, spent alone in some remote and desert spot. But from the fourth century such persons have tended more and more to live in communities, under monastic "rules" which owe most in the East to St. Basil, and in the West to St. Benedict. These "religious orders" have often incidentally performed works of immense practical utility both to the Church and to society, and many of them have been founded with some definite practical object as a secondary consideration in their constitution : nevertheless always their primary work, upon which everything else depends, is prayer in all its different forms. There are many religious orders in the Anglican communion, both for men and for women, and to them God joins such persons as he calls.

(b) *Fasting*. A second department of the rule of life will deal with fasting, a practice which Christ enjoined both by precept and example. Its object is to discipline and train the body, so that by learning, when required, to treat even innocent pleasures with indifference (though not of course with dislike) a man may break the influence of past sins and be the better able to control himself when he is tempted to forms of in-

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dulgence which are not so innocent. It is therefore admirably designed to free a Christian from being lashed and shackled to temporal desires in preference to things of eternal value and consequence, and is a powerful instrument of spiritual training.

In its literal sense fasting means total abstention from every kind of food and drink ; but in practice the term covers the discipline not only of food, but also of time and occupation and every form of pleasure. Yet in one instance loyalty to the unbroken practice of universal Christendom, from the first century until comparatively recent times, prescribes a literal fast—namely, from the midnight before receiving Holy Communion until after reception (when Communion is received very early in the day, it is customary to fast for at least six hours previous). No more appropriate form of spiritual preparation could be devised for the sacred feast upon the Body and Blood of Jesus than abstention from satisfying any physical appetite until the hunger of the soul is met.

In this instance, then, the Christian will literally fast, except in case of real necessity (a term of which the meaning is quite different from that of spiritual softness and physical self-indulgence, which sometimes pass for its equivalent). On other occasions of fasting he will rather regulate the quantity or the variety of his innocent satisfactions and enjoyments than abstain from them all completely ; or help to mark his self-discipline by undertaking some special additional labour of prayer, devotion, or mercy. In deciding on the form his discipline shall take it is often well for a man to choose something which will tend to mortify any particular indulgence that besets him.

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In the primitive Church the common times of general fasting were regulated by very varying customs in different places : but the rule which finally became established in the West fixes the following seasons for abstinence : every Friday in the year (unless superseded by one of the great festivals), the forty weekdays of Lent, the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of the four Ember seasons, the three Rogation days before the feast of the Ascension, and the vigil or eve of certain other feasts. At such times it is customary so far as is practicable to curtail the amount of food taken and to abstain altogether from flesh meat ; and those who for various reasonable causes cannot do this should observe the season by employing some other adequate means of corresponding spiritual discipline.

(c) *Almsgiving*. All temporal possessions are given us in trust by God. No doubt their primary purpose is to supply our own needs ; but this is only true because our own support forms part of the world's work for which God delegates to us a share in the responsibility. It follows that the ultimate purpose of all wealth, whether it be much or little, is to forward the work of God. The Christian's rule of life must therefore contain a definite and deliberate regulation about almsgiving.

It is not sufficient to give alms casually or on impulse : they should be given upon a methodical plan, with some consideration both for the manifold claims that may justly be made upon us for different charitable objects, for the different degrees of spiritual or corporal necessity under which the possible recipients labour, and for the proportion which we rightly can, or truly ought to, dispense. Large and generous alms-

giving, in an age of widespread luxury and selfishness, might very suitably be adopted far more often than it is as a specific means of mortifying covetousness and self-indulgence.

(d) *Self-examination.* The pagan Greeks were well aware that moral progress demands the fulfilment of the maxim, Know thyself. This can only be achieved by some form of self-examination : " Let a man prove himself," said St. Paul, and, " if we discerned [or, rightly judged] ourselves we should not be judged " (1 Cor. xi. 28, 31). There need be nothing morbid about such a task : it should not be conducted in the spirit of a heathen witch-doctor engaged in smelling out blood, but as a rational balancing of moral accounts, intended to reveal not only our sins, but the trend of our character and our progress in different virtues and graces.

The method of self-examination is first to note any obvious and known sins we have committed in the period under review ; and then to reflect upon the Ten Commandments in their Christian interpretation, or a detailed list of the Christian virtues, or some other convenient summary of Christian obligations, and note what further sins are thereby recalled, what comparison our lives bear to the standard by which we are examining them, and what progress or degeneration we have made. We may then end with an act of contrition and a prayer for forgiveness.

The times for self-examination are three. A short and simple self-examination should be made daily at our evening prayers, to cover the events of the past day. A more careful one should be made as part of our regular preparation for receiving the Holy

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Eucharist : this is explicitly ordered by St. Paul in the passage from which the above quotations are taken (1 *Cor.* xi.). Another should be made at somewhat longer intervals, to cover our whole life since the last periodic review ; a suitable period would be the whole year, from Easter to Easter, or each quarter of it, as some convenient festival falls.

It has been said already that recourse should be had to sacramental Confession after falling into mortal sin. But it is of great spiritual benefit to use this sacrament regularly as a means of self-discipline and grace, with a view primarily to spiritual efficiency. The frequency with which we can most usefully employ the sacrament may vary with individuals of different characters and temperaments. But an obvious rule which might well apply to any one is to go to Confession on the occasion of each periodic self-examination, and when in retreat.

(e) *Communion.* Finally, every one should have some rule of regularly receiving Holy Communion. It is of obligation in the Church of England for the laity to communicate three times in the year, of which Easter shall be one. In the primitive Church the rule was to communicate at least each Sunday, and the ideal standard almost certainly set by the apostles was that of daily communion (*Acts* ii. 46). With the fall that has taken place in the standards of spiritual life since the cessation of active persecution, it is probably wise that persons after being confirmed should be habituated in many cases to communicate not more frequently than once a month, for a beginning : but Christians can hardly be considered, in St. Paul's metaphor, to have reached the adult stage of spiritual

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life until they have become accustomed to a weekly communion ; and daily communion still remains the ideal practice of devout Christians living in a state of grace.

The preparation for communion is threefold, and consists (i) of prayer for grace to communicate devoutly, (ii) of self-examination covering the events since our last communion or confession, (iii) of fasting. After communion an equally careful thanksgiving should be made, with prayer for grace to make good and full use of the sacred gift received, together with continued recollection of the privilege that Jesus has made his throne in our heart.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNSEEN WORLD

(i) *The World of Spirits*

WE have already seen that man has two lives, a temporal and an eternal. He cannot satisfy the conditions and constitution of his nature unless he makes the eternal paramount over the temporal (which is really only a temporary phase in which eternal life is manifested) : and he can only give himself his proper chance of self-realization on the basis of eternity (and so fulfil his destiny) by linking himself to Jesus Christ in whose image he is created, and joining the current of his own life to the eternal life of him who is true God and true man.

Eternal life, then, is not the hope of a distant immortality, but the reality of a present immortal experience. It means simply knowing, loving, and serving God, letting our whole life and being rest voluntarily and trustfully on him, as we are well aware our physical life depends on him. And it is spiritual life, because God is a Spirit (*St. John* iv. 24).

Eternal life is therefore something that exists quite apart from ourselves : really it is God's life which he permits some of his creatures to share. And there are other spiritual beings besides men who have been called to share the life of God ; whom we call angels.

The doctrine of angels arose among the Jews because they came to feel that in his dealings with

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mankind and the world God did not always act directly, but through created agents. Such a belief is reasonable enough when we reflect that God makes so great use of created human beings as his agents in the world. If he employs men to build cities and found civilizations and disclose the manifold wonders and powers of nature, there is no ground for denying that in his larger sphere embracing all creation he may employ the services of other created beings. But the real authority for the doctrine of angels is that their existence and ministry was unquestionably recognized by Christ, as an examination of the gospels proves ; and few Christians are disposed to admit that the Son of God talked nonsense to his disciples, upon this subject or on any other.

About the nature of angels scarcely anything has been revealed. They are not, like mankind, compounded of two elements, spiritual and physical, but are wholly spiritual beings. There is no means of telling whether, on the occasions when they have appeared to human sight, such appearances were subjective or whether for such occasions the angels were made to assume an objective physical form.¹ The wings with which they are frequently represented in sacred art are of course purely symbolical, like the representations of halos upon saints or of palm branches in the hands of martyrs.

The work of the angels, so far as it is revealed, is to act as God's agents (*a*) in maintaining and controlling the moral development, and probably also the

¹ The appearances of angels belong to a vastly different category than the appearances of Christ between his resurrection and ascension, because Christ took to himself the compound nature of men, body as well as soul. See note on p. 37.

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material subsistence, of the created universe, (b) in sustaining and protecting mankind, and in some cases executing special missions of revelation or succour : they also (c) have a ministry of worship and of judgement. Several passages in the New Testament suggest that there are differences in grade and function among the angels : but the fully developed conception of the ninefold angelic hierarchy rests upon later speculation, and its value lies chiefly in its symbolism.

That the angelic creation has, like man, some power of moral choice is indicated by the fact that a part of it has misused that power and devoted itself to evil and rebellion. These fallen spirits, or devils, strive to bring the work of God to confusion and to lead men into sin.

Mankind is then born into a universe of spiritual conflict and of battle raging between opposed forces of good and evil, both possessing " free will," to whom (together with mankind) this temporal world is for the period of its existence given over as an arena (see, for instance, *Ephes.* vi. 10-18). There is a moral significance underlying all processes and events ; and it is the task of men both to render obedience themselves to God, and to co-operate with all the good in the world in the work of restoring the harmony of God's creation.

The individual Christian whose life is one with Christ's rests secure against the worst that the spiritual armies of evil and their captain the Devil, or Satan, can do to him. He fights as one member of a close-knit body, with celestial allies, under an invincible Commander : he is fenced with the protection of the angels, and ringed with all the prayers of all the saints ;

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and above everything he draws his life from him who is invulnerable life itself. Against such, death and the devil are powerless.

(ii) *The Faithful Departed*

Membership of the Catholic Church does not end at death. Physical death marks the end of our temporal probation, but is only a milestone in the course of our eternal life: so the faithful departed are as truly members of Christ and of the Church as anyone on earth.

The state of departed Christians, according to the apostolic tradition of the New Testament and other early Christian records, is one of rest and refreshment after the struggles of earthly existence, of progress in knowledge and spiritual enlightenment, and of cleansing and purification from the stains of earthly sin. This last aspect was naturally the least prominent (though definitely present) in the earliest age of Christendom, when every Christian was a potential martyr and the standards of spiritual life were therefore extremely high. After the cessation of persecution the worldly took the Church by storm, and the need of many real, but somewhat backward, Christians for progress in moral discipline after death became a fact of melancholy observation. But in any case the teaching of the Bible is perfectly clear, that the separation of soul and body at death is a penance for sin. The vessel which is at fault is broken by the potter with a view to its remaking in perfection for the last day; Christ's own body saw no corruption, but rose again at once, because he alone is perfect.

Prayer with and for the departed members of the

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body is inseparable from an adequate conception of Christian unity. Upon whatever occupation the souls of the faithful dead are engaged, prayer certainly forms an important part of it ; and in their prayers they are bound, as we are, to pray for the whole body of Christ and for themselves only as members of that body. So also, as they pray for us, we pray for them. From the time of St. Paul (2 *Tim.* i. 18) Christians on earth have prayed blessings on their departed friends, and in their liturgies have offered the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist for living and departed alike, since all are one in Christ, and all live to him.

All Christians are called to be saints, and all genuine Christians are in process of becoming saints ; but there are obvious differences in the degree of attainment which they reach in this present life. Some have attained even here on earth to an extraordinary pitch of unselfish devotion, meek unworldliness, and holy purity ; and to such the name of saint is given in a special and restricted sense.

Thousands of such saints have lived and died without attracting wide notice or enduring memory among their fellow-men, though they are none the less saints for that ; but the roll of those who are commemorated is the glory of the Church. Beginning with the mother of Christ and the princes of the apostolic company, it includes martyrs who resisted unto blood and other confessors who witnessed a good confession before the rulers of this world, evangelists and doctors who expounded the gospel in their generation, and men and women of every rank and vocation who by their dedicated lives showed forth in some pre-eminent degree the likeness of Jesus. And to these we also add

the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament who prepared the way of Christ.

From the earliest times Christians have believed that such saints as these, whose lives on earth were united most closely to Christ's, have attained after death to a closer vision of God than common folk, seeing that already they had so far purified and disciplined themselves in response to divine grace. The Church has therefore set special store by their prayers, since those who are nearest to Jesus' heart can naturally be expected to pray most surely in Jesus' name; and we call upon them to pray for us, with full confidence that God allows the request to be heard—not because the saints can bestow anything of themselves, but because we believe it to be the will of God that his blessings should wait upon our prayers, and not only upon ours, but on those of the whole body which Christ has formed to be his instrument of human service. The holy angels may also be invoked to afford us the aid of their ministry according to the will of God.

In the West, the distinction between the saints and other departed Christians has been far more firmly drawn than in the East, largely owing to the influence of St. Augustine, who divided the dead into the two classes of those we ought to ask to pray for us, and those for whom we ought ourselves to pray. In the East no such definite cleavage has been recognized; all are prayed for at Mass, including the chief saints, and the prayers of any departed Christian may be invoked on behalf of the living.

The Western theory has two merits. It gives explicit recognition to the facts that those who will ultimately be saved leave the body in very divergent

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spiritual states, and that Christ himself acknowledged the existence of different grades of honour in his future kingdom (e.g. *St. Mark* x. 40 ; *St. Luke* xxii. 28-30 ; xii. 47, 48 ; xix. 12-26). But the Eastern practice is certainly the more primitive, and seems also the more logical. For whatever blessings the saints may enjoy are still derived from the grace of Christ their Saviour through the Catholic Church of which they are the most glorious members : and the growth in holiness to which all Catholics look forward in the life beyond the grave must steadily diminish the divergence in spiritual attainment between the saints and other faithful Christians. In fact, we may admit, without in the least derogating from the superior glory of the greatest servants of God, that the distinction between the chief saints and other holy souls is really one of degree, and rests upon practical convenience rather than on any fundamental theological difference.

(iii) *Eternal Death*

Christ taught most explicitly that at the end of the temporal dispensation there will be a last judgement. Naturally such an event can only be described in human words and with human imagery, since it lies completely outside the range of our present experience. The visions therefore in which the New Testament pictures it are symbolical ; but the fact is a literal truth.

The essential meaning of the last judgement is that there is an eternal cleavage between those who at bottom respond to grace in this life and those who at bottom spurn and reject it ; and at the end of the dispensation the cleavage will be made publicly mani-

fest by the touchstone of the immediate presence of God, which itself is heaven to those who love him, and hell to those who hate him.

For two reasons there must be a hell. First, human free-will is meaningless unless it means that man is capable of rejecting God by wilful persistence in rebellion and hatred towards him. It is sometimes objected that if a man realized the full implications of sin, and the real meaning of the love of God, it would not be possible for him to persist in evil. This is a form of the old argument that virtue consists in knowledge. But unfortunately it does not. Of course, knowledge of good is desirable and even necessary for the full practice of virtue : but knowledge of right and wrong is one thing, and it is quite another thing to act according to that knowledge. The greatest tragedy of sin is just that it means acting wilfully against the light.

Secondly, there must be a hell because God is good, and the final rejection of righteousness is unforgivable. God cannot change his character, which is love ; and those who hate love and refuse to change their own character condemn themselves to eternal hatred. Heaven means an eternal share in God's life : those who hate God and his life leave themselves nothing but eternal death to fall back on ; he is holy, they are the reverse ; heaven itself would be hell to them. And this explains why Jesus, the most compassionate of all men, taught such an uncompromising doctrine of hell.

The awful warnings which Christ delivered of the danger of hell were addressed to people who had the revelation of God and enjoyed opportunities of know-

ing what was required of them. It would be monstrous to suppose that everyone will be condemned to hell who fails to reach a certain fixed standard of saintliness in this life. That was the Jewish doctrine of "works" which St. Paul and the whole Church emphatically rejected. Mankind is judged according to the light afforded it, whether by revelation or by nature or by both (see page 141); and what merits hell is a degeneration of character that is wilful, and a persistence in evil that is deliberate.

It is God's will that all men should be saved, and he predestines no one to damnation. But in giving us freedom of choice he necessarily gives us also the opportunity to damn ourselves, and he would not be righteous if he ignored the result of our self-determination. If we are able to enter upon eternal life on earth, we can also choose to enter on eternal death. In this contingent sense it may indeed be said that if men choose to hate, it is God's will that they shall not inherit love. But the responsibility for this disaster is man's own.

Ample scope, then, is given in this life to every man to make his decision, though only God has the knowledge either of the character or of its circumstances requisite to read the nature of the decision made. To each man the result of his own probation is revealed at death; with the terrible clearness of a sure unhampered vision he knows then whether God is all his desire or all his woe; and in the course that he has chosen his future lies.

Either he grows in grace and holiness, winning nearer to God as he becomes more fit to bear the presence of all-holy Love: or he finds himself de-

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prived of God and of the life for which his nature was constituted to fit him, knowing all the torment of being condemned by his own choice, yet for ever bound to that choice by his own degenerate will, a self-made rebel wallowing in remorse without repentance, in despair without desire to hope, loathing God, yet loathing himself no less acutely. That last condition is what we mean by eternal death and hell.

(iv) *Heaven*

Heaven means union with the life of God, who is the fulness of being ; and to be "in" heaven therefore means to be in perfect enjoyment of positive existence and active self-realization with him—the complete fulfilment of all noble desires and all aspiring hopes.

This is a state which it is beyond human capacity to describe or even to comprehend with any accuracy of detail, because the fulness of it lies beyond anything that can be experienced on earth, and our thoughts and words are bounded by the limits of the things we have experienced. Nevertheless the devout Christian has a foretaste of it on earth in the spiritual life here begun ; and on the basis of that partial experience we can form a vague conception of what heaven itself will be, sufficient at least to make it possible for ordinary men to understand something of the meaning enshrined in the symbols and verbal pictures of heaven sketched by saints and prophets and, above all, by Christ.

Heaven is far better described as a state than as a place, though neither word is adequate and both contribute suggestions of value. It is full and everlasting

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life, perfected goodness, secure peace and joy and satisfaction, complete freedom, spiritual kingship and majesty, the glory of unfettered service, the love and companionship of the whole host of saints and redeemed, and direct communion with God—in brief, the Father's home.

In heaven there is neither time nor space, in our sense of those words ; not because the realities of time and space are there abolished or comprise less than they do on earth, but because they include infinitely more. It would be equally absurd to say that we are separated from heaven by such and such a number of years or centuries to come, for we have begun to inherit heaven already ; or that heaven is distant by so many yards or miles, in any given direction, for heaven is within us and about us. Indeed the Catholic Church on earth is heaven's working organ and agency, in the world but not of the world, an extra-territorial legation among men of the King of kings ; and sincere members of the Church are on inviolable heavenly ground from which they shall not be extruded.

Finally, heaven is not material ; “ flesh and blood ” cannot inherit it (1 *Cor.* xv. 50). Life there does not depend on food and drink and other physical necessities. Nevertheless we are promised a resurrection of the body at the last day as the final access of bliss, because the body forms one of the two associated mediums in which we have the power of self-expression. Just as when we begin our spiritual life here in the body, our body supplies important elements to the formation and control of that life, so hereafter we shall need our body for the full expression of our per-

sonal life. But now it is adapted to the needs and uses of physical existence : hereafter it will be such as to minister to the requirements of an existence that is wholly spiritual.

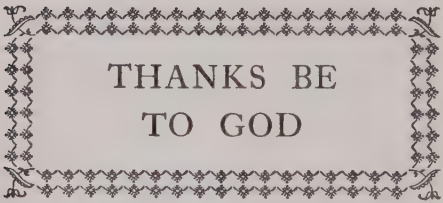
The body is more than a collection of material particles. These particles develop, extend, decay, and are exchanged ; and the external appearance of the body often undergoes in course of time a very radical alteration. Nevertheless not only is my body still my body, but, though it now contains not one of the material atoms which composed it ten or twenty years ago, it remains branded with a continuity of outward marks and inward expression which it has received throughout the years. Its future resurrection similarly means not a reassemblage of irrelevant material particles, but the restoration of all that is essential in the body, constituted on a heavenly and spiritual instead of an earthly and physical plan. It may be hazarded that in heaven we shall need organs neither of digestion nor of locomotion ; but we shall have forms in which our being is expressed, and the character of those forms will depend in some direct and continuous relation on the bodies that we leave behind at death.

It is quite obvious that the evangelists regarded Christ's ascension as the moment when his body was completely glorified : till then, even after his resurrection, it was subject to certain physical limitations. The only person therefore who could justly claim to give any description of a spiritual and heavenly body would be one who had some claim to have seen an objective manifestation of Christ after his ascension. The only person in that position is St. Paul, and he alone attempts to give an exposition in any detail of

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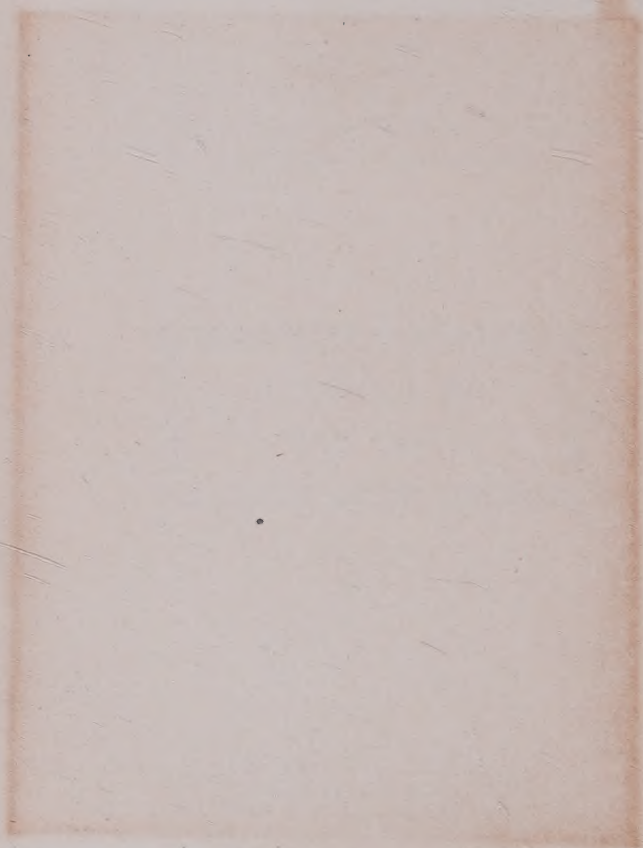
the resurrection of the body (1 *Cor.* xv. 35-58 ; compare *Acts* ix. 3-9).

What he says there about our future resurrection is little enough, yet it is quite sufficient, for it seems clearly founded on the vision he had seen outside Damascus. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."



THANKS BE
TO GOD

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